the Weekly Standard

DECEMBER 12, 2005

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DEAD END IN DARFUR?
JONATHAN KARL

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The Alito Vocabulary

In its December 1 story on Supreme Court nominee Sam Alito and his work on a 1985 abortion case, the *Washington Post* raised an eyebrow at the fact that Alito, then a Justice Department lawyer, had written a memo in which (hold on to your hat) "he referred to a doctor who performs the procedure as an 'abortionist.'"

Obviously, for the *Post*, Alito's vocabulary seemed newsworthy, inflammatory even, notwithstanding that the customary dictionary definition of an abortionist is (indeed) a doctor who performs the "procedure," as the *Post* delicately puts it. In polite company these days, reference is rarely made any longer to "doctors" and "procedures"—the preferred discourse is instead about "choices," which are made at "clinics" staffed by volunteers who are there to defend "human rights."

Lest you think THE SCRAPBOOK is exaggerating to make a point, consider one reporter's question from Arlen Specter's December 2 press conference on the Alito memo:

> QUESTION: The explanation that he was acting as an advocate, do you feel that encompasses or explains all the language in that memo? Because in addition to making arguments, I mean, if I can just refer to a couple of things in there, he refers to doctors who perform abortions as 'abortionists,' he talks about their financial incentives, which is a big trope of the pro-life movement . . .

That's right, they're not doing all those procedures for the money, only for the principle of the thing.

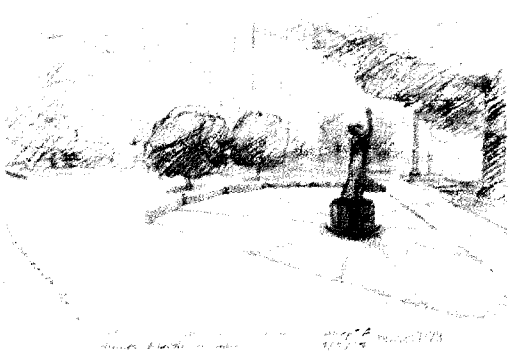
On the off chance that reporters who think this way, or their editors, either believe that abortionists no longer exist or that no doctor who "performs the procedure" is willing to accept that designation, THE SCRAPBOOK would like to recommend a story by Stephanie Simon that appeared in the November 29 *Los Angeles Times*.

Simon reports at length on an Arkansas doctor, one William F. Harrison, who "estimates he's terminated at least 20,000 pregnancies" since he began counting in 1967.

He's got one hell of a work ethic, too. Here's his daily schedule: "Three abortions before lunch, and three more after." He admits to Simon: "I am destroying life." But he also likes to think that "he's giving life" because his patients are being "born again," thanks to the procedure. And how does Harrison describe his profession? Yes, "He calls himself an 'abortionist.'" ♦

In Memoriam

Like more than a few other readers, we were startled a couple of weeks ago when Nick Kristof, the *New York Times* columnist, interrupted his generally favorable review of a new Mao biography to pick a quarrel with the authors over how many millions of Chinese the old monster had starved to death. Wrote Kristof: "The authors declare that 'close to 38 million people died' [in the Great Famine of 1958-61], and in a footnote they cite a Chinese population analysis of mortality figures in those years. Well, maybe. But there have been many expert estimates in scholarly books and journals of the death toll, ranging widely, and in reality no one really knows for sure—and certainly the mortality data are too crude to inspire confidence. The most meticulous estimates by demographers who have researched the famine toll are mostly lower than this book's: Judith Banister estimated 30 million; Basil Ashton also came up with 30 million; and Xizhe Peng suggested about 23 million. Simply plucking a high-end estimate out of an article and embracing it as the one true estimate worries me; if that is stretched, then what else is?"



Sketch of the Victims of Communism Memorial

This strikes us as something slightly indecent to quarrel over. So maybe we can all agree that it was at least 23 million too many. And perhaps we can agree, too, that killing on this scale is not something that should be easily forgotten.

Which brings us to the timely appeal we received in the mail from the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation. They've entered the stretch run of their fund-raising to erect a memorial to the 100 million victims (roughly speaking, Mr. Kristof) of Mao, Stalin, Lenin, et al. The statue—a bronze replica of the 1989 Tiananmen Square Democracy statue—is planned for a site a few blocks north of the U.S. Capitol. Details can be found at *www.victimsofcommunism.org*. ♦

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Lend Me Your Ears

Over the years, we've watched agog as Al Sharpton has sold everything from "economic justice" to D.C. statehood to his soul to the devil. Now, the man who garnered more 2004 Democratic primary votes than any other churchless reverend is selling something new: high-interest car title loans.

As the *Washington Post* reported last week, Sharpton has become a TV pitchman for LoanMax ("Finally, there's someone in Virginia who will loan money to people the big guys won't loan to.") In so doing, he has joined the distinguished ranks of other political types who humiliated themselves for money—from Ann Richards and Mario Cuomo munching Doritos, to Eleanor Roosevelt pushing Good Luck Margarine, to Bob Dole revealing the sagging state of affairs before he started popping his little blue pill.

We can't honestly say we're surprised. THE SCRAPBOOK always suspected Sharpton might end up selling used cars. But the car-title-loan business appears to be more lucrative. The transactions allow cash-strapped customers who can't get bank loans to borrow money by using their cars as collateral. And we hear the interest rates are competitive with those offered by Nicky the Nose down at the Cement Shoe Factory.

Sharpton's ads have aired in three states where legislators have considered capping what can amount to annualized interest rates of 360 percent. The attorney general in one of those states, Iowa, has called it "the most abusive lending practice in the state" (vehicles can be repossessed after one missed payment). Iowa senate Democrats have actually created a worksheet illustrating what would happen if a customer got a $400 car title loan from LoanMax. After two and a half months of making minimum payments, borrowers would have paid $374, and would still owe another $300. Sharpton's right: That's not the sort of deal the "big guys" go in for.

And look at it this way. Sharpton has finally found something he never had before: a job. ♦

Civic Education

There are disadvantages to indoctrinating college students with left-wing agit-prop. For one thing, not everyone goes to college. For another, the students are old enough to think for themselves. So some Madison, Wis., schoolteachers had the bright idea to start young. As explained by the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, third-graders at Frank Allis Elementary School were assigned to write 12 letters "urging an end to the war in Iraq" to "third-graders at other Wisconsin and out-of-state schools, federal lawmakers, the media and President Bush. If the war hadn't ended by the 12th day of letter writing, students would have had to start the process all over again."

The purpose? To teach "civic responsibility." Yeah right. Sounds more like training the tykes for employment in the sweatshops of the modern American left, where the favorite political activity is carpet-bombing ideological enemies with thousands of identical form letters. The only real surprise in this story is that the principal quashed the project. ♦

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Casual

THIS UNSPORTING LIFE

Now that the playoffs are upon us, the basketball and hockey seasons have commenced, Super Bowl XL arrives in February, and baseball's Opening Day is just 17 weeks away, it is time for me to make a public disclosure, to confess the truth, and emerge from the closet, as it were:

I am not especially interested in sports!

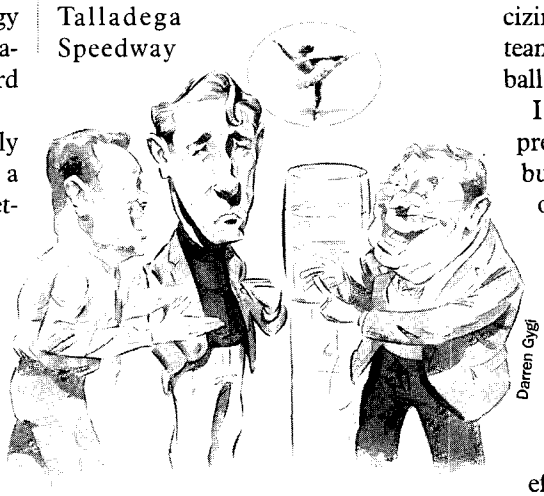
This is not to say that I dislike games in principle, or that I harbor subversive theories about the sociology of sport: you know, that the glorification of football is the first step toward universal fascism, etc. Not at all.

If I may say so, I was a reasonably competent athlete in my day. I was a competitive swimmer for years, a better-than-average softball/baseball player (good hitter, so-so fielder), competent on the tennis court, and played football for the Sidwell Friends School in Washington ("Kill, Quakers, Kill!"). The trophy I won as Best Athlete at Georgetown Prep Camp in 1961 still sits atop my dresser and, as my wife likes to say, seems to symbolize the zenith of her husband's achievements in life.

But even in those days when I played games fairly regularly, took gym at school, and followed the late, lamented Washington Senators (see CASUAL, April 11), I found the business of watching others in action, well, slightly tedious. I can still remember excitedly tuning in to Senators games on television in the late 1950s, and retiring in boredom by the fifth or sixth inning. I may well be the only living Villanova graduate who never saw the Wildcats playing basketball.

Please note that my indifference to sports—"not especially interested"—is carefully qualified. My son attends a Division III school, and I have enjoyed watching a few football games between scholar-athletes not destined for the NFL. I am usually good for one, maybe two, baseball games per season. I have watched, with mild enjoyment, televised portions of Wimbledon, dressage events, the Henley Regatta, Test Match cricket, boxing, the Kentucky Derby, and the World Cup.

I attended track and archery events at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, the 1971 U.S. Open at the Merion Golf Club, and once witnessed a race at the Talladega Speedway in Alabama. I spent 20 minutes or so at the 1980 Kentucky-Alabama football game so that I could tell my grandchildren I had gazed upon the person of Paul "Bear" Bryant. The list goes on.


Darren Gygi

But I confess that if I never saw another sports event in my life, I would survive. Particularly on television. Professional football—with its break-dancing players, preening coaches, and incessant yack from an army of announcers—leaves me cold. So, for similarly aesthetic reasons, does professional basketball. And if there is anything more ponderous than Major League Baseball—pitchers winding up, batters readjusting their stances and underwear, managers strolling to the mound—it is listening to expert analysis of these activities.

How to explain it? To some degree, I suppose, it's a question of upbringing. The *New York Times Magazine* used to have a feature (unintentionally comic) called "About Men," in which males would write brief, deeply felt essays about themselves. A startling percentage of them seemed to involve running across an old mitt in the attic, and growing teary-eyed at the memory of playing catch with Dad, now deceased; or shooting baskets with a brother who later overdosed on heroin. My father was not only too old and short-sighted to play catch successfully with me, but was even more bigoted on the subject of sports. He looked upon baseball as a boy's game played by grown men, and—romanticizing the University of Pennsylvania teams of the 1920s—thought pro football was unseemly.

I have inherited few of my father's prejudices, especially about politics, but this one seems to have rubbed off. Still, I live and work in the real world, and when two or three fellows are gathered together, making small talk at receptions, or on an elevator, the subject of sports is often unavoidable. Fortunately, sports information is equally unavoidable, and reading the paper, you have to make an effort to miss the score of yesterday's game, or the status of coaches, or the names of those players currently suspended, or fined for assault, or on trial for rape, or accused of taking steroids.

Then again, there are phrases you can cheerily repeat when conversation lags, or faces turn inquiringly in your direction: "Those [fill in the blank] were awesome yesterday," "[Fill in the blank] isn't emphasizing the fundamentals," "The [fill in the blank] have got a running game but no passing game."

These will give you the credibility you require under the circumstances, maintain friendly workplace relations, and allow you to participate with a smile while thinking about Suzanne Farrell or the Winslow Homer show at the National Gallery.

PHILIP TERZIAN

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Incoherent Dems

Regarding Robert Kagan and William Kristol's "Abandoning Iraq" (Nov. 28): When it came time for House Democrats to vote on whether or not to bring American forces home from the battlefront, they followed the same cut-and-run strategy they are proposing for our troops in Iraq. Lacking courage, the Democrats refused to back up their recent antiwar rhetoric with an antiwar vote. They wish to be able to speak out of both sides of their mouths, telling their donors in Hollywood and at *MoveOn.org* how much they oppose the war while telling their constituents back home something entirely different.

If Democrats are really itching for a debate on the war, then let's have it. They should explain how retreating from Iraq will impact our security and whether or not it will embolden our enemies. Democrats, though, would love nothing better than to take us back to the Clinton years, when we pretended we were at peace because we ignored the terrorist bombings that were taking American lives both here and abroad. President Bush decided it was time to leave fantasy land, and Democrats should know the war will go on, whether we choose to defend ourselves or not.

Thomas M. Beattie
Mt. Vernon, Va.

Flu, Away with You!

Michael Fumento's "Fuss and Feathers" (Nov. 21), regarding the risk of an H5N1 pandemic, was at times misleading. For example, he labeled the SARS and Hong Kong bird flu outbreaks false alarms, when in fact authorities effectively intervened to prevent pandemics. He missed the point of us "Chicken Littles"—to encourage awareness and preparation, not hysteria.

Here's the "Chicken Little" agenda: First, approach the prospect of pandemic the way you do a house fire. House fires are very rare, but so catastrophic when they occur that we need to be prepared, with insurance, alarms, and so forth. In the short term, pandemic is also very rare, but so catastrophic when it occurs that we need to be prepared with knowledge and a few supplies.

Second, we saw with Katrina that "authority" cannot save us unless we meet it halfway. During a pandemic, we know health care systems will be swamped and unavailable to all but the sickest people. Most people will convalesce at home. Bearing in mind that people likely will be sick for a week and weakened for three more, citizens consequently should ensure they have symptomatic treatments on hand to get their families through a bad bout of flu.

Third, because of a just-in-time economy, if a pandemic hits, there may be short-term outages of some staple goods (if, say, truck-drivers are out sick) and longer-term outages of imported goods, including most medicines for chronic illness (blood pressure, asthma, etc.). It would be wise to have a month, preferably three, of supplies in case trade is shut down. Businesses should have a plan to deal with 30 percent worker absence for a month or two.

Workers should stay home while sick, and employers should send the sick home, while parents should keep sick kids out of school. And, of course, wash your hands, or use alcohol wipes or waterless cleaning gels. The longer you can delay catching the flu during a pandemic, the greater the chance that new medications or a vaccine will become available.

A serious flu pandemic might happen tomorrow, or it might happen in 50 years. Hedge your bets with a little preparation, and then don't worry. Getting through any pandemic will require teamwork. Public health and big pharmas will work on treatments, but individuals and businesses can reduce collateral damage by being aware and prepared.

Lisa Thornquist, MD
Gilroy, Calif.

Michael Fumento unfortunately gets a little carried away in "Fuss and Feathers," even as he criticizes those who are hyping pandemic fears. Moreover, though I appreciate his calling my book *The Great Influenza* a "landmark" study, he also misuses some of the information in it.

The most important error he makes is understating the danger of the virus. It is true that even in 1918 most deaths probably came from bacterial pneumonia, and today antibiotics can treat that complication. But this must be understood in context, and with several caveats.

First, the virus itself would indeed kill people directly. In any pandemic, intensive care units will be overwhelmed, and without them a viral pneumonia would almost always be fatal. Even in the "mild" pandemic of 1957, 25 percent of the deaths came directly from the virus. In 1918 the chief target of the virus was the young adult population, which accounted for more than half the total dead. And in this demographic, most deaths did come directly from the virus. (Fumento accurately quotes me as attributing the actual mechanism of death to an overreaction by the immune system, but apparently fails to realize the virus itself triggered this overreaction, and therefore such deaths are the direct result of the virus.)

Second, even today bacterial pneumonia following influenza is a very dangerous complication; even with antibiotics, it has an 8 percent mortality rate. When the invading bacteria is antibiotic-resistant staphylococcus, the mortality rate jumps to 40 percent. And although under normal conditions staphylococci rarely cause pneumonia, in 1918 they often invaded the lungs.

Fumento makes another serious error when he suggests that conditions at the front during World War I influenced the evolution of the virus into lethal form.

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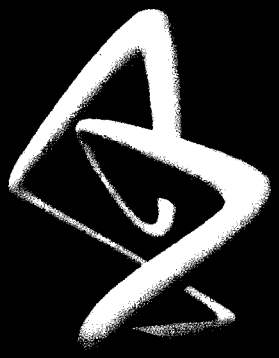
What Does This Stand For?



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Since these conditions are unlikely to be replicated, that in turn suggests we have little to fear. There is a very nice theory to this effect, but it is unfortunately contradicted by all the data and supported by none. That makes it simply another instance of what Thomas Huxley called "the great tragedy of Science—the slaying of a beautiful hypothesis by an ugly fact."

Fumento is correct that we have no way of knowing whether the next pandemic will come tomorrow or in 20 years or in 50 years. But the threat of a pandemic is real and serious. Indeed, we are actually more vulnerable to influenza today than we used to be. CDC estimates that even a mild virus such as the one that killed 34,000 Americans in 1968 would today kill between 89,000 and 207,000. (The increase is because of a dramatically increased population with impaired immune systems, including the elderly, cancer survivors who had radiation or chemotherapy, and so on.) Our economy's vulnerability to a pandemic has also increased. We need not panic, but we should be prepared.

JOHN BARRY
New Orleans, La.

MICHAEL FUMENTO RESPONDS: Lisa Thornquist's implication that disease outbreaks only fail to occur because we insisted they would is always the last refuge of epidemic and pandemic panic-mongers. Yet when I wrote my Hong Kong bird flu article and my initial SARS article there was nothing but talk of doom in the air. It was simply given that no matter what was done something horrible would happen. Additionally, it has always been assumed that preventive actions will be taken; Dr. Michael Osterholm assumes it when he tosses around his estimate of 360 million dead from avian flu, and I assumed it for my article.

Other than that I have little problem with Thornquist's suggestions. But stocking up on three months' worth of supplies for something that may happen during the next 50 years is hardly feasible for those of us without the salaries of medical doctors—much less their refrigerator and pantry space!

Regarding John Barry's letter: Unfortunately, if you read his original book, and then the afterword in the subsequent paperback edition, you might think there are two different authors. The apparent explanation is that the afterword was a sales tool meant to capitalize upon the avian flu hysteria. All of the references to Barry were from his pre-hysteria book. Yet even the afterword concedes that "the only good news seems to be that an increasing number of virologists now doubt that H5N1 [avian flu] will be the next pandemic virus."

Again we see two John Barrys when he writes above, "It is true that even in 1918 most deaths probably came from bacterial pneumonia," though his book says that though there were other causes of death, "by far the most common was from pneumonia caused by secondary bacterial infections." So which is it: "most probably" or "by far"? In any case, other sources I cited indicate the pre-hysteria Barry again is the correct one.

He also ignores my reference to the pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine to which I devoted two paragraphs, in part noting that "bacteria never develop resistance against it." It protects against almost 90 percent of all bacterial cases of pneumonia, including staphylococcus.

Barry's reference to direct viral deaths omits the availability of the antiviral drugs that I discussed at length. We do not have enough yet; but if Barry is convinced H5N1 is not bearing down on us, he has no case that a pandemic is imminent. The shortage decreases by the month and can be eliminated within a couple of years.

My discussion of the importance of the conditions of World War I was based not on Barry's book but, as noted, on Paul Ewald's *Evolution of Infectious Disease* (as well as historian Carol Byerly's recent book, *Fever of War*). Barry unfortunately provides us with no "ugly facts" that would slay these "beautiful hypotheses." Further, regarding the spread of the disease, nobody questions the importance of packed camps, trains, trucks, boats, and trenches. For this reason, among many, it is foolish to pretend our calendars read "1918."

Insofar as much of my article was devoted to preparing for the next pandemic on both a national and personal basis, I can hardly argue with Barry's conclusion. But CDC predictions, as we saw with AIDS and SARS, are often divorced from reality. It may not be as foolish to use 1968 for a reference point as 1918, but it remains that there were no antivirals in 1968, no PPV vaccine, and the use of new technologies to quickly and reliably produce flu vaccines was several decades away. Medicine has marched on, and there is no valid purpose in pretending otherwise.

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the weekly Standard

Truth or Consequences

For a brief moment at a think-tank speech here in Washington a few weeks back, Vice President Dick Cheney appeared to be unholstering the same, classic loose-lips-sink-ships argument that wartime White Houses have been firing at their critics since the Royal Marines burned James Madison's wartime White House nearly to the ground: When American soldiers start getting shot at overseas, the kind of partisan misrepresentation and outright falsehood to which we routinely subject our chief executive when we are at peace should simply stop. For, Cheney suggested, "untruthful charges against the commander in chief have an insidious effect on the war effort itself."

So one might argue, at any rate. And so the vice president himself might now be willing to argue about terrorism and Iraq, he acknowledged—were it not for his absolute confidence in the resolve of our frontline troops. So fine and true is "the character of the United States armed forces," Cheney advised his audience, that no amount of civilian griping back home can possibly defeat them.

There are two things worth noting about the argument Dick Cheney is "unwilling" to make concerning White House critics and troop morale. The first is that the problem is not the morale of forward-stationed U.S. servicemen, which has remained remarkably high. If the war is to be lost, it will be a collapse of stateside civilian morale that loses it. Everything else is secondary; domestic public opinion is almost all that matters, as the vice president, of all people, must surely be aware.

The second thing worth noting about Cheney's not very significant argument is the thrilled, have-you-no-decency-sir reaction it's inspired from his opponents. A plausible guess can be ventured *why* they are so thrilled. In nowadays America, dissenters from executive-branch national security policy like nothing better than to cast themselves as Joseph Welch—bravely holding fast to honor and righteousness even as some Senator McCarthy figure at the White House impugns their patriotism. But the play can't start until the impugning does. So everyone's impatient to feel impugned. That speech by the vice president? It'll do. "Ugly" and "demagogic," huffs columnist Michael Kinsley. "After all, if untruthful charges against the president hurt the war effort . . . then those charges will hurt the war effort even more if they happen to be true. So [Cheney is] saying in effect that any criticism of the president is essentially treason."

Here we have an unusually fascinating variety of nonsense logic. How can it be demagoguery to complain about a lie? If that kind of "demagoguery" is now to be forbidden, how will anyone be able to tell lies from truth in the first place? And if they can't be told apart, what will make those still-circulating, unexposed falsehoods any less threatening to the war effort? Anyhow: Since when has an accusation's ability to screw up the president's plans been thought more important than the accusation's fundamental validity? "Stifling criticism that might shorten the war is no favor to American soldiers," Kinsley writes—the apparent corollary being that any and all such criticism, sound or spurious, is to be welcomed with open arms.

Kinsley is hardly the only one who's proceeding on that assumption, incidentally. Consider a recent piece of news produced by the American Civil Liberties Union—which outfit, whatever else one might be inclined to say about it, has never before been known for evidentiary carelessness.

On October 24, the ACLU made public an analysis of several dozen autopsy reports and related documents obtained from the Pentagon by means of a Freedom of Information Act request for records concerning foreigners detained in Afghanistan and Iraq. The deaths-in-custody of 44 such detainees were detailed in those documents, according to the ACLU's press release and accompanying explanatory chart. According to the original documents themselves—which are posted on the ACLU's website— the actual number of deaths involved appears to be only 43. But never mind about that. More to the point—the intended point being, in the words of the press release, that "U.S. operatives tortured detainees to death during interrogation"—was the contention that the Pentagon itself had labeled 21 of these 43 deaths "homicide."

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That number wasn't even close to accurate. The documents show that military medical examiners attributed 19 of the 43 deaths to natural causes, 2 others to factors as yet "undetermined," called one further death an "accident," and left the "manner of death" box in 8 case files entirely blank. There were 13 official "homicides," not 21. And documents associated with at most 5 of those homicides contain even the vaguest hint of possible wrongdoing by American personnel. The other 8 appear to have been "homicides" only in the technical sense that mortuary physicians use the term—to indicate any nonaccidental death resulting from human agency, whether sinister or innocent.

And what would an entirely innocent homicide look like, you ask? Innocence is in the eye of the beholder, of course, but try this on for size: Two of the very same "homicides" the ACLU has for two months now been content to cite as evidence of "widespread" human rights abuses involve wounded Iraqi insurgents captured after armed engagements with American troops. Both men were evacuated to U.S. hospitals where surgeons attempted to save their lives. But neither man survived his injuries.

Not the sort of thing they investigate on *Law and Order*.

And not the sort of thing that American newspapers and television networks any longer investigate either, apparently. The ACLU's October 24 press release was extensively covered in the press. And its "21 homicides, many under questionable circumstances" datum has since become a "fact," inevitably cited in an endless stream of stories about our current government's peculiar propensity for torture and other such subhuman activities. No one seems to have noticed that the whole thing is bogus.

But hey, so what—right? Untruthful charges like these could help "shorten the war." How dare the vice president complain about them.

—David Tell, for the Editors

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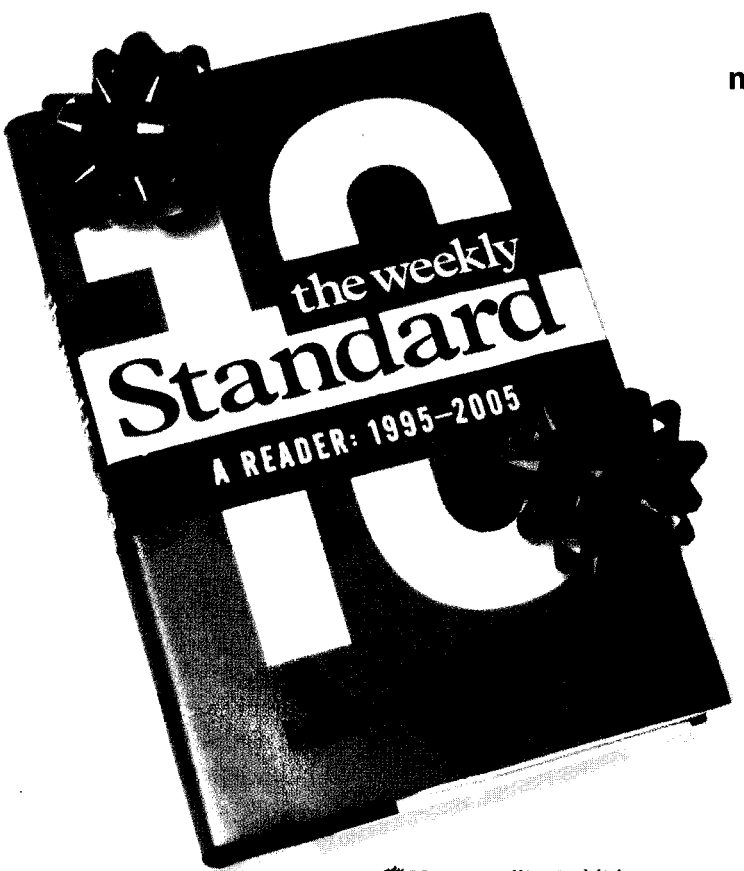

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Pump Up the Volume

Finally the "nonpolitical" White House gets wise.

BY FRED BARNES

WE NOW KNOW what was behind President Bush's mysterious refusal for so many months to respond to Democratic attacks on his Iraq policy—a refusal that came at great political cost to himself and to the American effort in Iraq. It wasn't that Bush was too focused on Social Security reform to bother. Nor did he believe Iraq was a drag on his presidency and should be downplayed. Rather, Bush had made a conscious decision after his reelection to be "nonpolitical" on the subject of Iraq. It is a decision he now regrets. And has reversed.

Here's how a senior White House aide explains the decision not to answer criticism of the administration's course in Iraq: "The strategic decision was to be forward-looking. The public was more interested in the future and not the past, since it was just hashed over during the election." The president didn't ignore the subject of Iraq entirely. He delivered a half-dozen speeches on Iraq and the war on terror, including an evening, prime-time address, in the first 10 months of 2005. He just didn't rebut partisan attacks.

Harm was done. "Obviously the bombardment of misleading ads and the earned media by MoveOn et al. had an impact," the Bush aide says, "and culminated during the Libby indictment and the [Democratic] stunt of the closed session of the Senate" on prewar intelligence. "That's when we pivoted."

By then—and we're talking about early November—Bush's job approval had plummeted. So had public support for the Iraq war. And there's a direct correlation between the two. The president stood at 51 percent job approval in the Gallup poll when he was inaugurated to a second term last January and 52 percent in the Fox News survey. Now he's at 37 percent in Gallup, 42 percent in Fox.

Support for his Iraq policy did not fall as precipitously, but it was in gradual decline, and that accelerated. Gallup asks interviewees if the Iraq intervention was worth it. Forty-six percent said yes last January, 38 percent in November. When only a little more than one third of the country believes the most important national security policy of the era is worth pursuing, the president has a huge political problem. Even Republican members of Congress were getting queasy. Bush, with less sway in Washington today than 10 months ago, has been hard-put to reassure them.

Though the White House hasn't said so, there was more to the president's no-response decision than aides have let on. In Bush's defense, he's never routinely responded to attacks. And the successful election in Iraq on January 30 was followed by several months of euphoria about Iraq. There was hope the insurgency would collapse. It didn't.

I think the president, after a contentious first term, wanted to soften the partisan edge of his image and be more statesmanlike. His speeches on Iraq, tough-minded as they were, reflected that. And so did his willingness to reject cues from his conservative base of supporters and to offer, in public concessions, to compromise with his opponents.

In short, it was a purple detour, a blend of Republican red and Democratic blue. A White House official insists there was no specific decision to be less hard-nosed on domestic issues in the president's second term and drift to the center. But that happened, just as his approach to Democrats on Iraq was easing up. A mere coincidence? No way.

Next to Iraq, the most controversial item on Bush's agenda, especially among Democrats, is tax cuts. At the outset of 2005, he decided to put off a drive in Congress to make his deep tax cuts permanent, a move that upset conservatives. Later, the Bush administration steered the presidential tax commission away from radical tax reform. He also put aside the proposed amendment banning gay marriage, another red flag to Democrats and liberals but a favorite issue of conservatives.

On Social Security reform, he broke with his own strategy for winning congressional approval. The plan was to agree, but only as a last resort, to raise the ceiling on the amount of personal income subject to payroll taxes. Instead, Bush announced early on that he'd agree to lift the ceiling. He also backed progressive benefits reduction—the well-off would be hit the hardest—which is opposed by conservatives.

In filling vacancies on the Supreme Court, the president chose conservative nominees who wouldn't ignite instant opposition by Democrats. He took responsibility for the slow response to Hurricane Katrina, though the mayor of New Orleans and governor of Louisiana were more to blame. And so on. Overall, while Bush is a conservative, he often didn't act like one.

The nonpolitical strategy was a failure. Democrats picked up on none of his overtures. Once they began a campaign of accusing Bush of lying to the country about prewar intelligence to justify invading Iraq—an impeachable offense—Bush abandoned the strategy. The pivotal moment came after nine months of unanswered charges by Democrats concerning

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prewar intelligence. The president was a slow learner.

On Veteran's Day, November 11, Bush fired back. And he and Vice President Cheney have continued to do so quite effectively. His poll numbers, measured by Fox News after the president's speech last week laying out his "plan for victory" in Iraq, showed strong improvement. Sure, it's only one poll, but his approval rating jumped six points in the Fox News survey, from 36 percent to 42 percent.

Is this the start of a Bush comeback? Could be. And there's even stronger evidence of a turnaround. Until Democrats began rallying to the call for the immediate withdrawal of troops from Iraq, the debate was between Bush and the facts on the ground. Now it's between the president, who wants to withdraw troops when conditions in Iraq allow, and Democrats, who want to set a fast timetable for pullout and stick to it, no matter what. This debate Bush should win. ♦

Tories Get Toff

Have Britain's conservatives found the alternative to New Labour? BY GERARD BAKER

TIME WAS when the selection of a new leader of the British Conservative party was an event of some significance.

For nearly two centuries, between 1800 and 1997, all but one of the leaders of the world's oldest and most successful political party served also as Britain's prime minister. The list of Tory leaders for most of that time reads like a roll call of some of the world's great statesmen: William Pitt the Younger, the Duke of Wellington, Robert Peel, Benjamin Disraeli, Arthur Balfour, Winston Churchill.

In the last half century, it's true, as Britain's global stature has diminished, the star-power of top Tories has declined a bit too. And yet, even in these quieter years, the party managed to churn out a giant in Margaret Thatcher, capable of walking the world stage.

But it has been a while now since being leader of the Conservative party guaranteed you a leading role in British, let alone world, history. For the last decade Tory chiefs have played a series of essentially comical, walk-on parts in a drama written, directed, and choreographed by the Labour party of Tony Blair.

In quick succession since 1997, William Hague, Iain Duncan Smith, and Michael Howard have come and gone as Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition, the political equivalent of those familiar characters in London theatrical farces, always losing their trousers or falling into the orchestra pit.

So next Tuesday, when the Conservatives, still toiling in futile opposition, and still outnumbered almost two to one in the House of Commons by Labour, announce the name of their new leader, you could be forgiven for giving it a mental pass, placing it in the same category as news of the latest change in the prime-time lineup at CNN, or a shake-up in the bullpen by the Tampa Bay Devil Rays.

And yet there is a rare buzz of excitement this week among Britain's luckless Tories, a quiver of sharply heightened expectations.

The man who, barring a shock of seismic proportions, will emerge next week as the winner of the two-month balloting of 300,000 Conservative party members is causing even some of the most jaded of Britain's political observers to take a fresh look at the ravaged Tories.

Part of the reason for the new mood is that David Cameron is a rare thing in British politics—a genuinely fresh face. The exigencies of the British party system usually require a would-be party leader to serve a long apprenticeship, working his way up through the ranks. Not for Britain the potential of the U.S. primary system to throw up someone as a political leader who had scarcely been heard of on the national scene six months before.

But Cameron is as unfamiliar to the public at large as any national political leader has ever been. Fearfully young, only 39, he was elected to the House of Commons just four years ago, the shortest period between entering parliament and becoming leader of anyone in more than a century.

Cameron's freshness has been enhanced by the suddenness of his success. Three months ago, his precocious campaign for the leadership was regarded as at best a trial run for a future bid, or at worst a bit of a joke.

The firm favorite to succeed Howard, who resigned after the Tories lost their third straight election in May, was David Davis, a solid party man of long-standing leadership ambitions.

But in the space of a week in early October, at the party's annual conference by the sea in dreary Blackpool, Cameron impressed members with a dazzling speech that was light on detail but delivered with remarkable sure-footedness and aplomb. Davis followed with a dreary, pedestrian effort that reminded most Tory members why they had failed for the last ten years, and Cameron was suddenly unstoppable.

Cameron is an unusual Conservative leader in another, rather unexpected sense. He is a frightful toff.

In the weird, upside-down, but still class-obsessed British political culture, it's all right to be posh if you want to lead the working-class Labour party—Tony Blair went to one of the finest British private schools and Oxford.

Gerard Baker, U.S. editor of the Times *of London, is a contributing editor to* THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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But, for three decades now, such a background has been death for an ambitious Tory. The last three Tory prime ministers—Edward Heath, Margaret Thatcher, and John Major—all hailed from solid middle-class backgrounds and public education.

Cameron is a throwback to the pre-1960s Conservatives. He went to Eton, England's grandest public school, and Oxford, where he seems to have frittered away his time getting drunk in fine dining societies, as well as tasting some of the less legal substances available to undergraduates (though that did not stop him from getting a degree with top honors).

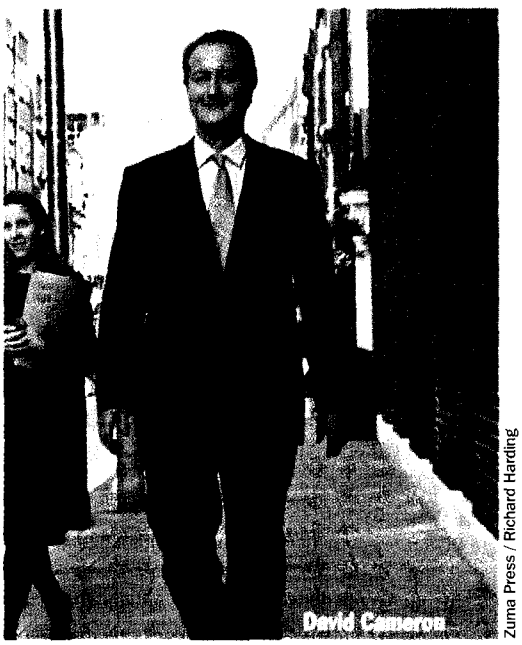
Cameron has something else going for him. Unusually for a Conservative leader, he has been lionized by the press. Partly because he is of roughly the same generation and social background as most of the influential commentariat on what used to be called Fleet Street (he even lives in Notting Hill, famously beloved of London's media glitterati), the pundits have fallen for him with gusto, surprisingly suspending for a moment their famous cynicism.

In his sudden ascent Cameron has cleverly leveraged his novelty and youth into a political philosophy. Arguing, with some justification, that the Tories have failed to appeal to younger voters in the last ten years in part because they have looked like an angry old bunch of malcontents forever hankering after a better yesterday, Cameron has presented a more positive, forward-looking approach.

He has in fact consciously modeled his campaign on that of George W. Bush in the 2000 Republican presidential primary. He talks enthusiastically of a "compassionate conservatism." While he emphasizes the case for tax cuts, he reassures an electorate that still likes its public health and education by making the mantra of his public services approach: "We're all in this together."

In fact, his sharpest political advisers, such as George Osborne, the even younger shadow chancellor of the exchequer and a fervent admirer of America, argue that the Tories are in a similar position to the one the Republicans were in by the late 1990s—squeezed by a left of center party that has relocated itself on the center ground of politics, needing to emphasize its core values but also to look more modern and in tune with the values of most voters.

This sounds seriously overdone.



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The Republicans by 2000 were never in the sort of shape the Tories have been in these last 10 years—getting less than a third of the vote at successive general elections.

More plausible is the other model Cameron's friends cite—that of Tony Blair. In 1994, after Labour had spent more than a decade in the political wilderness, the youthful new leader symbolically set about reforming it, giving it a rhetoric at least that rejected its extremist past, promising to keep taxes low, and generally making it respectable for middle-ground voters to choose Labour.

Cameron's supporters openly emulate Blair in describing themselves as "modernizers." They acknowledge that it was a change both in the substance of what Labour offered under Blair and in the tone and style of the man and his leading collaborators in the New Labour project that turned Labour's fortunes around.

Blair has been so successful, in fact, that he, rather than any of the Tory failures of the last decade, has been the key reason that the Conservatives have fared so badly in the last 10 years. While presiding over steady growth in the public sector, Blair has still been able to reassure voters in Middle England that he is on their side—indeed in the last three years, it has been he, rather than the Tories, who has best articulated the case for a larger private role in the provision of public services.

And it is Blair who has set the political framework that the new Conservative leader will try to shape to his own benefit in the next few years.

The prime minister, under pressure over the unpopular Iraq war—which, by the way, Cameron supported, though with caveats—has promised to step down before the next election, due in four years. Further political setbacks this autumn suggest Blair's departure may come sooner rather than later. The betting from insiders at Westminster is that he'll be gone in a year or so.

His successor, Gordon Brown, though a co-architect of New Labour with Blair, is seen as more of a traditional tax-and-spend Labourite; that is certainly the hope of the bulk of his party, for whom Blair's enthusiasm for the market is almost as sacrilegious as his support for President Bush.

Cameron's advisers see the next election, then, as a battle for the mantle of the soon-to-be-ex-prime minister. Whom will the British people trust more to continue to make the privatizing reforms needed for Britain's public services, without dismantling the welfare state?

There's something deeply depressing about all this. The campaign on which Cameron will base his bid to restore the Conservatives to power is

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being fought on a dramatically shrunken political battleground. He promises to use the dividends of growth, for example, for both tax cuts and increases in spending. But Britain's bloated public sector has continued to grow under Blair. Though less stifling of free enterprise than the costly welfare states of continental Europe, the British nanny state remains well enshrined. Though the economy has done well relative to Europe in the eight years of Labour government, higher taxes and ever increasing regulation have left productivity stagnant.

With mounting demographic pressure on the public purse, the Conservatives' offer of a pale "me too" approach to Labour's policies looks like a lost opportunity.

Cameron's few critics in the press ponder this and note that, before he went into politics, this bright new hope of the Conservative party had a very 21st-century occupation: He was a public relations man, and a rather good one, by all accounts. They worry that it has been precisely too much of the PR man's skills that has damaged British politics in the last decade, and wonder whether the promise of more of the same is quite what the country needs.

But the idea of Cameron as a flack on the make seems a tad unfair. Instead another figure comes to mind. Cameron's rapid ascent from obscurity, the near universal conviction of the media and the pundits that he is the man for the job, and his studiedly vague approach to a governing platform call to mind another man anointed as the great savior of conservative politics a few decades ago.

When George Romney's presidential ambitions were at their peak in 1968, one astute observer commented, "The problem with George is that—deep down—he's shallow."

Britain's Tories are taking a gamble this week; and they will be praying hard that their new leader does not deserve that judgment. Unlike the 1960s Republican party, the modern Conservatives can't afford another dud. ♦

Umbilical Accord

Senate Democrats resist a stem cell solution.

BY WESLEY J. SMITH

FOUR MILLION BABIES are born in this country every year, bearing gifts of inestimable value. Foremost among these, of course, is the love they bring into the world and elicit from it. More practically, however, these infants bring with them something that we are learning has great potential to alleviate human suffering: the stem cells contained in the blood of their umbilical cords.

For example, as reported in the peer-reviewed medical journal *Cytotherapy* (Vol. 7, 368-373), umbilical cord blood (UCB) stem cells have restored feeling and some mobility to a woman who had been paralyzed with a spinal cord injury for 19 years. While we must remember that one dramatically improved patient does not an efficacious treatment make, the potential for cord blood to treat paralysis was further boosted with the recent announcement that rats with spinal cord injury also showed moderate improvement after being treated with human UCB stem cells (*Acta Neurochirurgica*, Vol. 147, 985-992).

That's not all. In a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (352:20, May 19, 2005), infants with Krabbe's disease, a terrible illness that results in progressive neurological deterioration and death in early childhood, showed impressive improvement when treated before the onset of symptoms. UCB stem cells have also successfully treated sickle cell anemia. So far 67 human afflictions have been successfully treated with umbilical cord blood stem cells, and more may soon be added to the list. In animal studies, researchers have demonstrated the potential of UCB stem cells to treat stroke (*Annals of the N.Y. Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 1049, 84-96). Some of these cells also appear to be "pluripotent," that is, potentially able to transform into all tissue types—the characteristic supposedly making embryonic stem cells superior to adult stem cells, according to many researchers (*Cell Proliferation*, Vol. 38, 245-255).

And there is even more good news about umbilical cord blood stem cells: Unlike embryonic stem cells, UCB stem cells don't cause dangerous tumors. Moreover, they are easier to tissue-type to prevent rejection than are bone marrow stem cells. And here's another big plus: This research is *utterly uncontroversial*. No embryos are being cloned. No embryos are being destroyed.

Despite all this, umbilical cord blood stem cells remain woefully underutilized in research laboratories and medical clinics. This is primarily a supply problem. Rather than being "banked" (deep frozen and stored) for future use, most cord blood is still thrown away. As a result, most of the banked umbilical cord blood is maintained privately by parents for the potential future use of their own children, and is thus unavailable for wider use.

Congress, supported by President Bush, has before it a bipartisan plan that, if passed, would dramatically increase the amount of cord blood available for medical use and in research. The Bone Marrow and Cord Blood Therapy and Research Act of 2005 (S. 1317) would create a national UCB distribution system supported by about $175 million over five years. Among its provisions, the measure would:

- establish a system of publicly

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funded UBC banking, allowing parents to donate cord blood at no cost;

• dramatically increase the genetic diversity of stored UCB stem cells, so the banked stem cells will have sufficient genetic diversity to assure potential patients of obtaining a good match and avoiding tissue rejection;

• provide sufficient funds to ensure quality control of the banked stem cells;

• create a clearinghouse for information sharing and sample exchanges among regional storage facilities, so a California patient could obtain stem cells from, say, Missouri, if the latter sample is the best genetic match.

The cord blood legislation is supported across the political spectrum. No senator has publicly announced his opposition. The House version has already been passed by an all but unanimous 431-1.

Yet despite this widespread enthusiasm, the measure is stalled in the Senate. Majority Leader Bill Frist wants the bill moved to the floor for an immediate vote. To do so in the waning days of this session, he would need the unanimous consent of all senators. That isn't a problem for the majority party. According to Eric Ueland, Frist's chief of staff, "Republican senators are, to a member, ready to vote for and pass this legislation." What about across the aisle? "Democrats have paid lip service to the bill," Ueland says, but their "leadership is working behind the scenes to hold it up and prevent it from coming to a vote."

How could this be, when Democrats so often beat their breasts about the necessity of getting revolutionary stem cell treatments to suffering patients? I called Senate minority leader Harry Reid's office to find out. For some reason, my call has yet to be returned. So the hold-up appears to be with one or more Democratic senators.

Since these obstructionists don't have the courage to speak publicly, we can only engage in conjecture about their motives. According to one Senate source with whom I spoke, the bill is being held hostage to ensure a floor vote on increased federal funding of more controversial embryonic stem cell research. But with President Bush vowing to veto that bill, and its earlier passage in the House well below override levels, federal embryonic funding will almost surely not become law. The point thus would seem to be to embarrass the president by having his policy rejected by the Senate. If so, the delay is senseless in light of the fact that Frist supports the embryonic stem cell bill and has already promised its sponsors a Senate floor vote early next year.

This may be seen by some senators as a clever political ploy, but coming at the expense of desperately ill people, the delay is immoral. As Senator Sam Brownback told me, "The politics over unrelated controversial and unproven technologies is getting in the way of a practical and readily available technique that would start saving lives soon after this bill became law."

Time is of the essence. If the bill is not passed before the next recess, it may take another six months to reach the Senate floor for a vote—assuming it ever does. Every day that the bill is bottled up is a day preventing patients from receiving desperately needed help. ♦

Who's Your Daddy?

There's more to fatherhood than donating DNA.

BY W. BRADFORD WILCOX

BIRTHS to unmarried mothers are at a record high in the United States—almost 1.5 million in 2004 alone, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. While the rising trend is of long standing, one novel factor driving up childbearing outside marriage is the growing popularity of single motherhood by donor insemination. The incidence of this "assisted reproduction," as it is called, has more than doubled in the last decade.

Most public discussion of donor insemination for single women has been carried on in a neutral, positive, or breathlessly celebratory tone. Isn't it great, the thinking seems to be, that these women are fulfilling their aspiration to be mothers with the latest technology that medical science can offer? Support groups like Single Mothers by Choice and mainstream publications like the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post* describe donor insemination for unmarried mothers occasionally as a "sad" necessity for women who cannot find "satisfactory" partners, but more often as "awe"-inspiring, "liberating," or "empowering." Television shows like NBC's drama *Inconceivable*, broadcast this fall, glamorize assisted reproduction.

This enthusiasm is notable at a time when European countries are skeptical enough to actually ban the process. Sweden and Italy bar single mothers from engaging in either in vitro fertilization or use of anonymous sperm (or, in Italy, eggs), and Britain and the Netherlands have banned the anonymous donation of sperm. Also striking is how adult-centered our public conversation has been. Until recently, virtually no attention was paid to how the chil-

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dren of donor fathers make sense of their experience. Nor has the public debate acknowledged the moral and social ramifications of deliberately creating a whole class of children without identifiable fathers.

But there are good reasons to worry about this latest manifestation of fatherlessness. Listening directly to the voices of donor-conceived children should give us pause. Kyle Pruett, a psychiatrist working at the Yale Child Study Center, reports in a recent book that such children have an unmet "hunger for an abiding paternal presence." He quotes one girl as saying, "Mommy, what did you do with my daddy? You *know* I need a daddy or I can't *be* a child." A story in the *New York Times* last month reported that donor-conceived children check out strange men to see if they match the physical traits of their donor dads. "It'll always run through my mind whether he meets the criteria to be my dad or not," said JoEllen, a girl from Russell, Pennsylvania.

Young adults voice similar sentiments. Olivia Pratten, a 23-year-old Canadian conceived through donor insemination, told the *Toronto Globe and Mail* about her fatherless life: "I had to grieve. It wasn't till I was 17 or 18 that I got it. I felt very angry. How dare someone take my choice away from me? How dare the medical profession tell me it doesn't matter?" And a 15-year-old boy profiled recently in the *New Scientist* was so determined to find his father that he submitted a sample of his own DNA to an online DNA-testing service. He was able to match it to a family surname and from there to track down his dad. Young people with less ingenuity are probably out of luck. U.S. law does not regulate donor insemination, and most donors choose anonymity, making it very difficult to find them.

But there is an even more basic reason to worry about the deliberate creation of fatherless children. The best evidence from the social sciences shows that fatherless children as a group fare less well than children reared in intact, married families.

I recently chaired a team of 16 family scholars with expertise in disciplines like economics, anthropology, and psychology who surveyed the latest peer-reviewed research on family structure and child well-being. Our report, *Why Marriage Matters* (available at the website of the Institute for American Values), found that children reared in single-parent homes are two to three times more likely to face serious negative emotional, social, or health outcomes than children reared in intact, married families. These findings apply up and down the social ladder. They also apply in societies with generous welfare systems like Sweden, where poverty for single mothers is largely a nonissue.

A 15-year-old boy profiled recently in the New Scientist *was so determined to find his father that he submitted a sample of his own DNA to an online DNA-testing service.*

Take crime. One study of 6,403 boys carried out by scholars at Princeton and the University of California at San Francisco found that boys raised in single-parent homes are twice as likely as others to end up in prison. Or teenage pregnancy. University of Arizona psychologist Bruce Ellis, who studied 762 girls in the United States and New Zealand, found that girls who saw their father leave the family before age six were more than six times as likely to have a teenage pregnancy as girls whose fathers stuck around through their entire childhood. Or suicide. A study of all Swedish children between 1991 and 1998 found that those in single-parent families were twice as likely to attempt suicide and 50 percent more likely to succeed in committing suicide than children in two-parent families. Note that these studies control for factors like race, education, and poverty that might otherwise distort the relationship between family structure and child well-being.

It appears that children are even affected physically by father absence. Pioneering work by Bruce Ellis suggests that the timing of puberty in girls is linked to the presence of a biological father: Girls who grow up without their biological fathers experience puberty (and therefore are likely to have sex) at significantly younger ages than girls who grow up with their fathers.

Why do fathers matter to children? Fathers typically bring an extra pair of hands, an extra set of kin, and extra income to the child-rearing enterprise, not to mention extra concern for the child's well-being. They also perform better than mothers when it comes to disciplining their children —especially their sons. Finally, fathers who are in good marriages with the mothers of their children implicitly teach girls to expect respect from members of the opposite sex, and boys to treat girls and women with respect.

For all these reasons, it is time to bring children's welfare into the discussion of donor-assisted single motherhood. A serious consideration of children's best interests would probably lead us down a regulatory road comparable to that being pursued in Europe, with bans on the donor-insemination of single women and on the anonymous donation of sperm and eggs. It won't be easy to rein in a multibillion-dollar fertility industry that is used to catering to the desires of adults unhindered by regulation or moral objection. Nor is it possible to protect all children from fatherlessness, given the vicissitudes of life. What should be possible is to reject the deliberate conception of children without flesh-and-blood fathers committed to playing a paternal role in their lives. ♦

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Improving Bush's Vision

It might be time for Republicans to think about retooling their economic policies

By Irwin M. Stelzer

President Bush's vision of sound economic policy has remained remarkably constant over the last five years—tax cuts, free trade, and a generous amount of immigration. And why not? Low taxes, free trade, and new immigrants have benefited our economy over the past quarter century, and helped produce a remarkably successful economic performance after the shock of 9/11.

Yet all does not seem to be well. Americans are unhappy about the president's management of the economy and pessimistic about the future. Maybe popular sentiment is simply shortsighted, or uninformed. But there is another, more rational reason for voter discontent: Times have changed, and Republicans have either not noticed or not adapted to the new realities.

Consider, for example, the thinking behind the president's recent trip to South America. He risked all of the bad images that his staff had to know would result from the protests skillfully organized by a Castro-loving Venezuelan president and a cocaine-loving Argentine footballer to visit a region with which we already run a staggering trade deficit, to urge it to accept trade deals that offer it even better access to our markets. The president undoubtedly believed he needed to push his free trade agenda. After all, free trade is one of the policies in which he believes deeply, and for good reason. No need here to rehearse the best-known passages from Adam Smith, or to tout the contribution that the liberalizing of trade since World War II has made to our prosperity, and to the prosperity of those countries that have participated in the trade-opening policies that Bush wants to push forward.

What may have gone unnoticed by the president, though, is that the world has changed since he decided to take on the trade unions and protectionists. For one thing, we have learned that our enthusiasm for freer trade is not exactly matched by our trading partners. The European Union will not, no matter how many meaningless concessions its rather unreliable negotiators make, do anything to expose its farmers to the rigors of international competition. Or to stop the flow of subsidies to Airbus, subsidies that make life difficult for Boeing. And it is clear the Chinese have no intention of ending the pilferage of our intellectual property.

Add those up and you have a world where the industries in which we have a real advantage—the three A's of agriculture, aircraft, and audiovisual products—are facing an uphill battle. Throw in a bit of currency manipulation by the Chinese, the Treasury's recent denial notwithstanding, and you have good reason to wonder whether the president should be spending political capital on new trade deals. True, any good economist will tell you that U.S. consumers benefit from free trade even if our partners choose to be foolish enough to enrich us by subsidizing their exports. But any *really* good economist would respond with two important caveats.

First, leaders must concern themselves with political economy, not economics. In addition to efficiency, relatively easily measured and understood, there is the more elusive issue of equity. It is Americans' sense that equity matters, that ours should be a society in which opportunity should be equally available to all. Hence the appeal of calls for "fair" as well as free trade. Never mind that these calls come from self-interested, protectionist trade unions and environmentalists, the former eager to protect their members from foreign competition, the latter eager to stop the economic growth that they mistakenly believe causes environmental degradation. A recitation of the efficiency and growth-inducing consequences of free trade is not an adequate rebuttal. Voters understand that there is more to life than efficiency, and want their leaders to make

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deals that are fair as well as economically productive.

Second, any *really* good political economist will have read more than excerpts from *The Wealth of Nations*. Adam Smith intended his words for policymakers—he was not an idle academic scribbler. He aimed his analysis at, among others, "that insidious and crafty animal, vulgarly called a statesman or politician." But it was not only because of that audience that Smith was careful to frame his analysis of free trade in nuanced terms. It was also because in supporting free trade, as in other matters, Smith was moderate and practical.

So Smith called for care in applying his principles. Yes, he wanted import duties repealed. But he also added:

> Were those high duties and prohibitions taken away all at once, cheaper foreign goods of the same kind might be poured so fast into the home market, as to deprive all at once many thousands of people of their ordinary employment and means of subsistence. The disorder which this would occasion might no doubt be very considerable.

Not as considerable as special pleaders claim, but "very considerable" nevertheless. Workers might find new jobs, and funds expended on supplies could be deployed elsewhere. But the fixed capital devoted to a business "could scarce be disposed of without considerable loss. The equitable regard, therefore, to [the manufacturer's] interest requires that changes of this kind should never be introduced suddenly, but slowly, gradually, and after a very long warning."

It is, of course, not news that those industries seeking protection often take "gradual" to mean "never"—witness the failure of the apparel industry to be satisfied with a 10-year warning that its special protections were to be removed. But it remains the case that free trade creates losers as well as winners. And we should not assume that the losers are always less worthy of our consideration than the winners, especially if we can develop policies based on distinguishing the deserving losers from the undeserving losers.

In the latter category are members of trade unions that exploited their monopsony power by extracting extortionate compensation from monopoly providers—think auto workers in the days when General Motors could easily pass on its increased costs, or airline pilots in the days when regulation allowed the airlines to pass all wage costs on to consumers. A creative gale of destructive competition from imports, in the case of autos, or new entrants when regulation was ended, in the case of airlines, is just what the efficiency doctor ordered, and has resulted in a massive wealth transfer from monopolistic producers and monopsonistic unions to consumers. There is an unmistakable equity ring to such an efficient transfer.

But we also must consider the deserving people adversely affected by free trade—the mill worker who labored for 30 years, paid her taxes, educated her children. Through no fault of her own she finds herself unable to compete successfully with lower paid laborers in China and other countries.

The mill worker's plight stems from a fundamental change to which the administration has yet to respond. In recent years we have seen a dramatic change in the worldwide supply of labor—the supply of more-or-less undifferentiated laborers competing for work has trebled, from around 400 million to 1.2 billion. Any such massive increase in supply can have only one consequence (other things being equal, of course): a severe fall in price. And until the new entrants to the world labor force become affluent consumers, if ever they do, that fall in price will not be reversed.

Meanwhile, partly as a consequence of falling labor costs, and of the pressure increased competition puts on American businesses to pursue, and laborers to accept, efficiency-enhancing measures, profits are rising. And as the members of the undifferentiated labor force struggle to compete, or to gain the education and skills that will differentiate them from the millions of unskilled members of the world labor force, the gap between their incomes and those of the skilled and educated widens. Worse still, if people tend to marry their economic and social equals, and if studies that show an increasingly high correlation between the income of children and that of their parents are to be credited, we may be witnessing a lessening of a distinctive characteristic of the American dream—social and economic mobility.

How has the administration responded? In two rather perverse ways. First, it has asked Congress to extend tax cuts for corporations and upper income families, and tax relief for dividend income and capital gains. Combined with a lack of spending restraint, some of these cuts are contributing to a rising deficit at a time when the economy is growing at an annual rate of 4 percent, and hardly in need of a fiscal stimulus.

More important, are we certain that policies that were appropriate to the world in which Ronald Reagan lived over two decades ago, and may even have been appropriate to the world as it existed when George W. Bush moved from the Texas to the national and international stages, are still the ones we should pursue now? It was not so long ago that reductions in marginal tax rates were necessary to increase incentives to work and risk-taking. But with taxes now lower than in modern memory, corporate profits so high that the boardrooms of America are populated by executives who can't figure out what to do with all that

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money, and with untold billions in the hands of hedge fund managers for whom no risk seems too great, is it unreasonable to wonder whether we need a further tilt in favor of high earners and entrepreneurs? One can only hope that someone in the administration is charged with the responsibility of figuring out a proper conservative response to this change. That response might, for example, include a reduction in the regressive and job-killing payroll tax, with the revenue shortfall recouped by taxing the oil imports that pose an increasing threat to our national security.

The second way in which the administration has responded is to persist in spending political capital on pushing freer trade agreements through Congress. This might be a tenable policy if it were accompanied by effective programs to meet the needs of what I have called the deserving displaced. But it hasn't been. After all, the policy question is not, "Are we for or against freer trade?" Or at least it ought not to be. The harder and more relevant question—the one that Adam Smith would put to us—is, "How do we obtain the benefits of freer trade in an equitable manner?"

The answer is to continue to support trade-opening measures, but accompany them with mechanisms that transfer some of the benefits of free trade from the winners —in large part passive recipients of those benefits—to the deserving losers. The development of mechanisms that actually achieve this sharing objective is no easy task. For any such program must be administered by government, and as we have recently been reminded by reconstruction efforts from New Orleans to Baghdad, government is not good at implementing even the best crafted policies.

A paper by my Hudson Institute colleague Diana Furchtgott-Roth considers 13 government programs designed to assist displaced workers. These attempt to incorporate both the notion of compassion and the idea of transferring some of the gains of trade and change from the winners to the losers. But, to cite just one example of the gap between aspiration and achievement, Congress passed and the president signed a Trade Adjustment Assistance program in 2002, providing among other things that older workers displaced by foreign competition receive from the government checks covering half the difference between the wages at their old jobs, and what they are able to earn at such jobs as they find after being laid off. Great idea, poor implementation. Because the forms are complicated, and the number of hoops through which an applicant must jump seemingly infinite, only 1,403 of the tens (by some reckoning, hundreds) of thousands of displaced workers received checks between August 2003 and December 2004. For example, only 41 of the 4,800 workers laid off by Pillowtex in North Carolina applied and qualified.

Until we can do better than that, would it not be well for the president to direct his attentions to helping displaced American laborers before seeking to gain what has often proved to be only nominal access to overseas markets for our manufacturers, in return for still greater access for foreign businesses to our much larger market?

What is true for trade is true, also, for immigration. Immigration, legal and illegal, creates winners and losers. The most obvious winners are the immigrants themselves, and the families to whom they repatriate a large portion of their earnings. Other winners are employers and people with pools to clean and lawns to mow. Losers are the unskilled workers who must compete for jobs with immigrants—estimates are that immigration reduces the wages of the unskilled by about 5 percent—and the local communities where large numbers of immigrants congregate, who bear a significant burden in social services for new immigrants.

Now, we surely don't want to deprive ourselves of an infusion of people who come here to work and live the American dream. We surely don't think we can deport some 10 million people who have slipped across our borders illegally. Equally surely, we shouldn't want to have an increasing number of people who live here but remain outside the American mainstream, cut off by an inability to speak our language or understand our history. A president intent on solving the immigration problem would insist on a solution that consists of a full-out fight to restore assimilation as a goal, while at the same time forging a generous policy of attracting and welcoming newcomers—and compensating "losing" communities and workers.

So, what is to be done? The place to begin is with a realization that in all of these policy areas, the alternatives on offer by the Democrats are nonexistent, or counterproductive. If fresh thinking on trade, taxes, or immigration is going to happen, and if such thinking is going to become politically viable, it is going to happen because conservatives make it happen. If the Bush administration wants to take the lead in this rethinking—as it may be doing in the case of immigration—more power to it. If it is preoccupied elsewhere, then the task falls to others—in Congress, in think tanks, and in the broader conservative policy community. After all, if Bush wants to focus on winning the war in Iraq, many of us wouldn't complain. Conservatives have in the past won when they put daring but sensible policies at the service of an attractive candidate and a vote-generating machine. The last of these is in place; the search for the candidate will begin in due course; it is fresh thinking on policy that is most urgently needed. ♦

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Dead End in Darfur?

Robert Zoellick's frustrating mission to end the genocide in Sudan

By Jonathan Karl

Nyala, Sudan

The negotiating tables had been set with green tablecloths in an open air room at one of the finest hotels in Nairobi. Each setting included a glass of water, a microphone, and a headset for translation. There were seats for the rebels, some of them dressed in desert battle fatigues and stylish camouflage turbans. There were also seats for the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union, and even Canada: a coalition to warm the heart of the most fervent multilateralist. Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick came in ready to deal, but by the time he took his seat, the rebels, unable to agree on who their leader was, had walked out.

And there sat Robert Zoellick, alone.

For thirty minutes he waited quietly, taking notes and, one assumes, wondering how he ended up with one of the most thankless jobs in American diplomacy: head of the U.S. effort to stop a humanitarian crisis in Sudan that the United States has labeled genocide.

The rebels were from the Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA) of Sudan's Darfur region. This is the antigovernment group that launched a few attacks on police stations and government warplanes in Darfur in early 2003. Those attacks provoked the massive counterattack by government forces and government-supported "Janjaweed" militias that has caused the current crisis. Zoellick believes the only way to fix Darfur is to get a peace agreement between the rebels and the government. But there's a problem: The rebels are now fighting amongst themselves, leaving two factions that claim to lead the SLA. The two groups so detest each other that they refused to be together in the same room.

Jonathan Karl is senior foreign affairs correspondent for ABC News. He has traveled to Sudan three times this year.

And so, Robert Zoellick sat alone.

Zoellick's patience paid off, sort of. After half an hour, the rebels walked back in and took their seats. The leader of one faction declared he was simply coming back to make a statement, and then to leave again. Zoellick insisted that everyone stay until the meeting was over. He made it clear his patience was running out: "While you are bickering," he said, "your people are dying." It was the first time Zoellick became visibly angry on his latest trip to Africa, but it would not be the last. Before heading back to Washington, Zoellick would blow his top. More on that later.

Zoellick has been to Sudan four times this year. "I haven't been to any other country this year four times," he says. "I haven't even been to New York four times." Unfortunately, he has little to show for the effort. In fact, the situation in Darfur has actually gotten worse since Zoellick made his first trip here in April. In recent months, a new front has opened in the war on civilians. The people who fled to refugee camps when their villages were destroyed now find themselves under attack *inside* the refugee camps.

A high-ranking African official who did not want to be identified told me the rationale for this sick new phase in the war on civilians: Elements of the Sudanese security forces and the Arab militias they have armed believe the rebels are using the camps as a safe haven and a fertile recruiting ground.

After flying into Darfur with Zoellick, I broke off from his entourage to spend some time at the Kalma refugee camp. I didn't see any signs of rebel activity, but I did hear intense anger toward the government of Sudan.

A little over two years ago, Kalma was nothing more than a five-mile strip of sand. Now, over 85,000 people live here in what is the largest refugee camp, and one of the most dangerous, in Darfur. Virtually everybody I spoke to had stories about violence against people

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in the camp. A tribal sheikh was killed the night before I arrived; another was kidnapped that morning.

People showed me their wounds and their scars. One man showed me a bullet wound in his back, next to his shoulder blade. The bullet traveled through his body at an angle, exiting his chest. It's a minor miracle he survived; the reason he did is that the gunman, who had attacked his village and murdered the rest of his family, left him for dead.

These refugees may not have much, but they are eager to document the atrocities committed against them. Another man brought me a bag full of bullet shells. He told me where he had gathered them and said they were from an October 23 attack in which Sudanese security forces swept into Kalma and arrested the top tribal sheikh for allegedly plotting against the government.

Earlier I had spotted an elderly blind woman making her way to a tattered shelter. In one hand she held a long walking stick. With her other hand, she balanced a bowl of mud on her head. After she dumped the mud in front of her shelter, she told me her name was Khadija and she was 76 years old. Khadija explained to me that she was using the mud to make walls inside her tent. She needed the walls, she told me, to protect herself from the gunfire at night. Khadija had been working on the walls for almost two months, but progress was slow. The walls were uneven and unsteady. They stood only about three feet tall. They wouldn't protect her from anything.

I heard stories from the young and healthy as well. Two women named Fatima and Marium invited me into their shelter. They had built comparably formidable mud walls for the same reason: to protect themselves and their children from gunfire. Fatima has six children; Marium one. Both were young widows. Fatima told me she had been raped when she ventured out of the camp to gather firewood. Marium said she had also been raped. Three times. They said their rapists were Janjaweed—the Arab marauders who unleashed the terror here two years ago with weapons supplied by the government and who now continue to terrorize the refugees.

Fatima, Marium, and the others I spoke to at Kalma camp were tough, self-reliant people. Before all hell broke loose in 2003, they lived as people in Darfur had for centuries, as farmers in small villages. Now they find themselves stuck in a vast slum of shanties. They hate it here, they said, but they are afraid to go back to their decimated villages. Only now that the camp has come under attack, they are also afraid to stay.

"We have nobody to protect us here in Darfur," Fatima told me. "Just the foreigners and God."

Fatima would have had no way to know about it, but only a day before in Khartoum, Zoellick had made it clear that foreigners—U.S. or otherwise—were not coming to the rescue. The forum was a policy speech at the University of Khartoum. In a speech laced with references to Sudan's rich and bloody history, Zoellick outlined a "road map" to peace. Zoellick's road map is based on the U.S.-brokered peace agreement that ended one of Africa's longest-running and bloodiest civil wars: the 21-year conflict between the Muslims of northern Sudan and the Christians and Animists of southern Sudan. The north-south peace agreement is an unheralded triumph of American diplomacy that ended a war that had killed at least 2 million people. Under the deal, which took several years to negotiate, rebel leader John Garang was brought to Khartoum and made vice president of the very government he had spent most of his life trying to destroy. If fully implemented, the north-south agreement would make the former rebels in the south partners in the federal government and give them a high degree of autonomy.

In his speech, Zoellick said the first step to putting Darfur back together is to get a similar peace agreement between the government and the rebels in Darfur. Clearly the speech was written before those rebels walked out on him in Nairobi.

During the Q & A session, somebody in the audience demanded to know how peace could be achieved if the African Union peacekeepers now in Darfur—which are technically only an observer force—are not empowered to disarm the government-sponsored militias that have inflicted so much terror. Zoellick was about to lose his patience again. Before answering, he rephrased the question. "Will the outside world come and clean this up?" His answer: "I don't think we can clean it up." He continued: "It's a tribal war that has been exacerbated by other conditions and, frankly, I don't think foreign forces ought to get themselves in the middle of a tribal war of Sudanese."

A tribal war? That sounds like a drastic departure from President Bush's stark portrayal of the crisis in Sudan as genocide. Tribal conflict has been a fixture of life in Darfur, and most of Sudan, for a long, long time. In fact, tribal war was a defining characteristic of this land for generations as the British tried to run Sudan under the legendary colonial leader Gen. Charles "Chinese" Gordon in the late 19th century. Gordon sent a 22-year-old officer named Rudolf Slatin to be governor of southwestern Darfur in 1879. A year later, Slatin was named governor-general of all of Darfur. His memoir, *Fire and Sword in Sudan*, has been out of print for more than 100 years, but it's a great read if you can find it. Slatin writes at length about his attempts to mediate conflicts between various tribes "who were constantly on the verge of war." Slatin had some successes, but ultimately fared little better than Gordon, who was famously beheaded when Islamic rebels stormed the

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presidential palace in Khartoum in 1885. For his part, Slatin was kidnapped by the Islamists and held hostage for 13 years before making a dramatic escape, first to Cairo, and then back to Europe.

Winston Churchill, borrowing heavily from Slatin, wrote a history of Sudan called *The River War* in 1902. "The situation in the Soudan for several centuries," Churchill wrote, "can be summed up as follows: The dominant race of Arab invaders was unceasingly spreading its blood, religion, customs, and language among the black aboriginal population at the same time it harried and enslaved them."

But in its centuries of conflict, Darfur has never witnessed anything like the widespread, orchestrated terror campaign of the last two and a half years. When Churchill wrote, Darfur was a land of farmers, who lived in small villages, and nomadic herders. The herders and the farmers often clashed over access to land and water, but the Darfur of two and a half years ago looked a lot like the Darfur of Churchill's and even Gordon's time. In the violence of the last two years, many of Darfur's villages have been wiped off the map, replaced by vast slums like the Kalma refugee camp. More than two million hardened and independent people have been bombed and burned out of their homes and made almost completely dependent on relief agencies. In the process, more than 200,000 have been killed. You can debate whether or not this is genocide, but this isn't just another in a long series of tribal wars.

When Zoellick first took on the Sudan assignment near the beginning of this year, he scored some successes. Thanks in part to his cajoling—and transportation provided by U.S. Air Force C-130s—the number of African Union peacekeepers in Darfur more than tripled, from 2,000 in the spring to almost 7,000 today. The peacekeepers, even with their limited numbers and limited mandate, have succeeded at deterring some attacks.

More important, the government of Sudan agreed in February to ground the warplanes that had been firing on villages. The resulting cease-fire meant an end to the wholesale bombing, burning, and pillaging of villages. There wasn't much left to bomb; most of the non-Arab villages in Darfur had already been destroyed. Nevertheless, the violence decreased. The north-south peace agreement also brought hope for a change in Darfur, because America's man in the south, John Garang, would now be part of the government. Before Garang went into the bush to lead one of Africa's most feared guerrilla movements, he had earned a BA from Grinnell College and a doctorate from Iowa State University. He was somebody the Americans could deal with, and there was reason to believe he could change the long-distrusted government in Khartoum.

That moment of hopefulness is gone. On July 30, Garang was killed in a helicopter crash. Bad weather seems to have been the culprit, but the Khartoum government is so hated in the south that almost everybody there believes Garang was murdered as part of a government plot. The incident has cast a tremendous shadow over the peace accord, a shadow made even darker by the government's failure to meet its commitments to make the south a full partner. Instead of positive change in Khartoum, there is fear that the accord will fall apart. Garang's successor, Salva Kiir, is still talking peace, but his military commanders expect war. In the southern capital of Juba, Lt. Colonel Albino Akuei of the southern army told me he is convinced that it's only a matter of time before there is war again. "These are bad, bad people," he told me, referring to the government in Khartoum. "They are looting us. I want to be independent of these useless people."

And in Darfur, the violence started to flare up again in September. The State Department's assistant secretary for African affairs, Jendayi Frazer, puts the blame on a mix of general banditry, rebel forces, and Arab militias who, she says, may be supported by the government. Oddly, the head of the African Union peacekeeping force, Baba Gana Kingibe of Nigeria, is much tougher on the government of Sudan.

In a remarkable statement released on October 1, Kingibe accused government security forces of making four specific "coordinated offensive attacks" against civilians using Arab Janjaweed militias in the month of September. In a particularly brazen attack, Janjaweed gunmen invaded the Aro Sharow refugee camp on September 28, killing 35 people and injuring many others. Kingibe said that while the Arab gunmen attacked Aro Sharow on the ground, Sudanese Army helicopters flew overhead in what he called an "apparent air and land assault" on the camp. Although most of his criticism was directed at the government, Kingibe said the rebels are responsible for some of the violence. "There is neither good faith nor commitment on the part of any of the parties."

The government adamantly denied Kingibe's allegations. Some officials called for his removal from Sudan. A week later, the African Union itself came under assault. Unidentified gunmen attacked an African Union patrol, killing four Nigerian soldiers and two contractors. The peacekeepers are now having a hard time protecting themselves.

Zoellick has made a sustained effort to clean up this mess, which makes the recent setbacks especially frustrating. He has studied the history and taken time to get to

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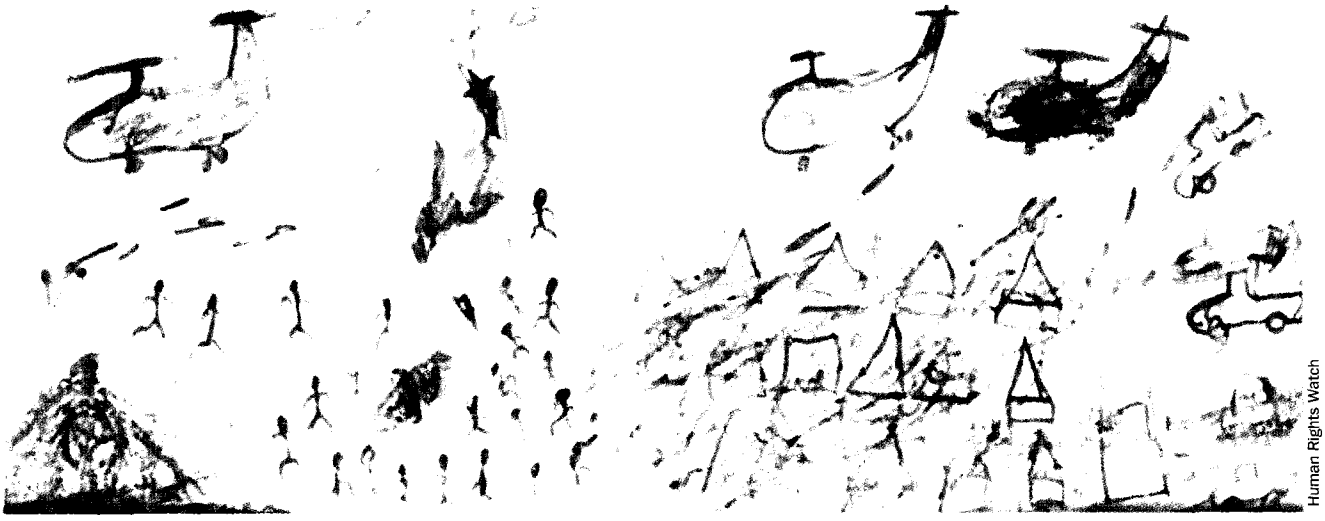

Human Rights Watch

"Targeted Homes": from a collection of children's drawings obtained by Human Rights Watch researchers at Sudanese refugee camps earlier this year. The drawings will be on display at the Ann Loeb Bronfman Arts Pavilion at Hillel headquarters in Washington, from November 28 to January 20.

know the players, the politics, and the policy. Before his latest trip to the Sudan, he invited Garang's successor to Washington. Kiir met with Vice President Cheney and then went to the State Department, where he spent nearly three hours with Zoellick.

Officials who bother to visit Darfur usually drop in for a quick photo-op and leave, but Zoellick has used his time here to see, and to try to understand, the worst of this crisis. He visited the town of Sheria just two weeks after violence that killed 81 people. The violence in Sheria is a microcosm of the whole crisis. It started as an attack on government offices by the rebel Sudanese Liberation Army. The rebels briefly took over the town, prompting a massive counterassault by the Sudanese security forces. Once the town was back in government control, the government-backed Janjaweed militia exacted revenge by torching the homes of civilians in a neighboring village suspected of supporting the rebels.

Zoellick came to hear the story firsthand. He sat through the official government version, which placed all of the blame on the rebels and denied any government attack on civilians. Next, Zoellick planned to talk to the victims in the village that had been attacked, but the local official in charge of Sheria insisted on going with him. Zoellick knew the people would be afraid to speak truthfully with a government official present. He bluntly told the guy to leave.

This led to a full-scale diplomatic blow-up. Weary from days of discussions with uncooperative rebels and lying Sudanese officials, Zoellick flew into a rage, threatening to report the man to Sudan's president Omar al-Bashir. The threat clearly didn't scare this official. This wasn't your typical diplomatic dialogue:

ZOELLICK: Either you go or I go to [Sudanese] President Bashir and tell him . . .

LOCAL OFFICIAL: I am Bashir here!

ZOELLICK: Give me your name, sir.

LOCAL OFFICIAL: I am Bashir here!

ZOELLICK: Give me your name.

LOCAL OFFICIAL: I am Bashir here!

ZOELLICK: Give me your name and we'll write President Bashir and tell him—

LOCAL OFFICIAL: I am Bashir here!

At this point, Zoellick looked a bit like an irate baseball manager arguing with an umpire over a bad call. When the Bashir threat didn't work, Zoellick stuck his finger in the official's face and yelled, "Out! Out!" To which the official responded, "Not out!"

"Why do you ask me not deal with you here?" the official demanded.

"Because you are emphasizing [one side] and I can't trust your government."

"I am a commissioner! I am a commissioner!"

Finally, Zoellick said, "Okay, you stay here." Then Zoellick himself left.

It's not clear if writing President Bashir would have done much good anyway. After meeting with Zoellick in Khartoum, Bashir was quoted by the official Sudanese news agency saying, "We don't need Zoellick to resolve our internal problems. The solution to the root causes of the problem lies with the people of Darfur themselves."

Such was Zoellick's fourth trip to Sudan. Will he be back for a fifth? He won't say. During the trip, he was often asked if he was optimistic that the Darfur crisis could be resolved. With each new setback, the answer seemed increasingly obvious, but Zoellick dodged the question.

He chooses to say only, "I am persistent." ♦

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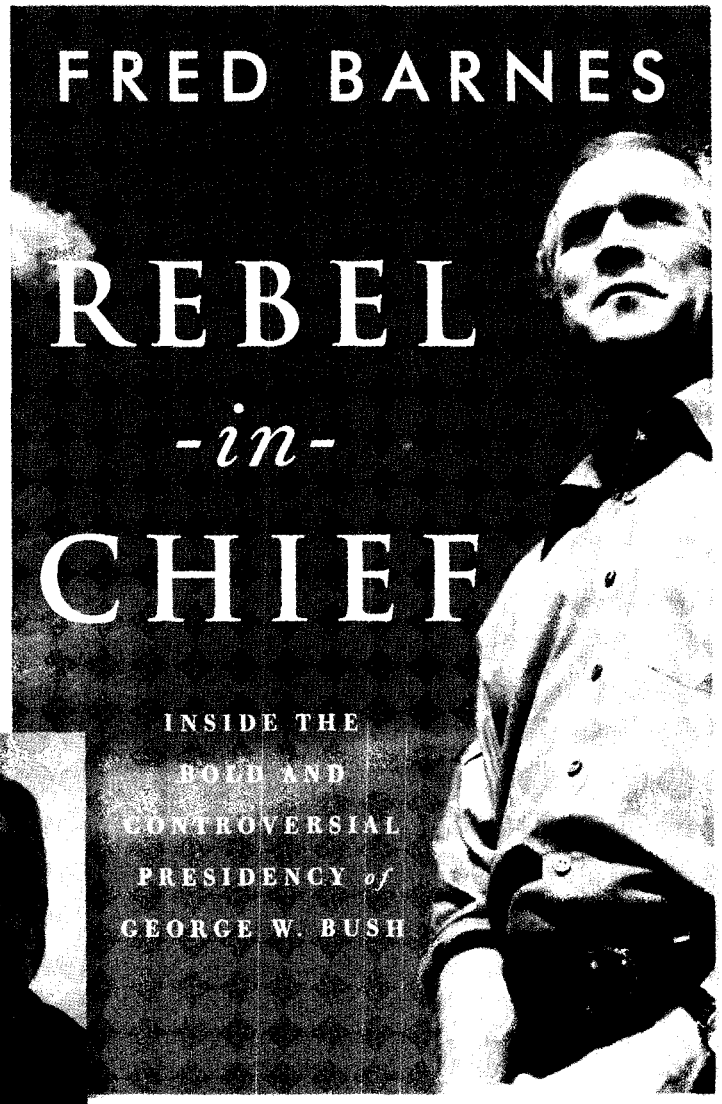

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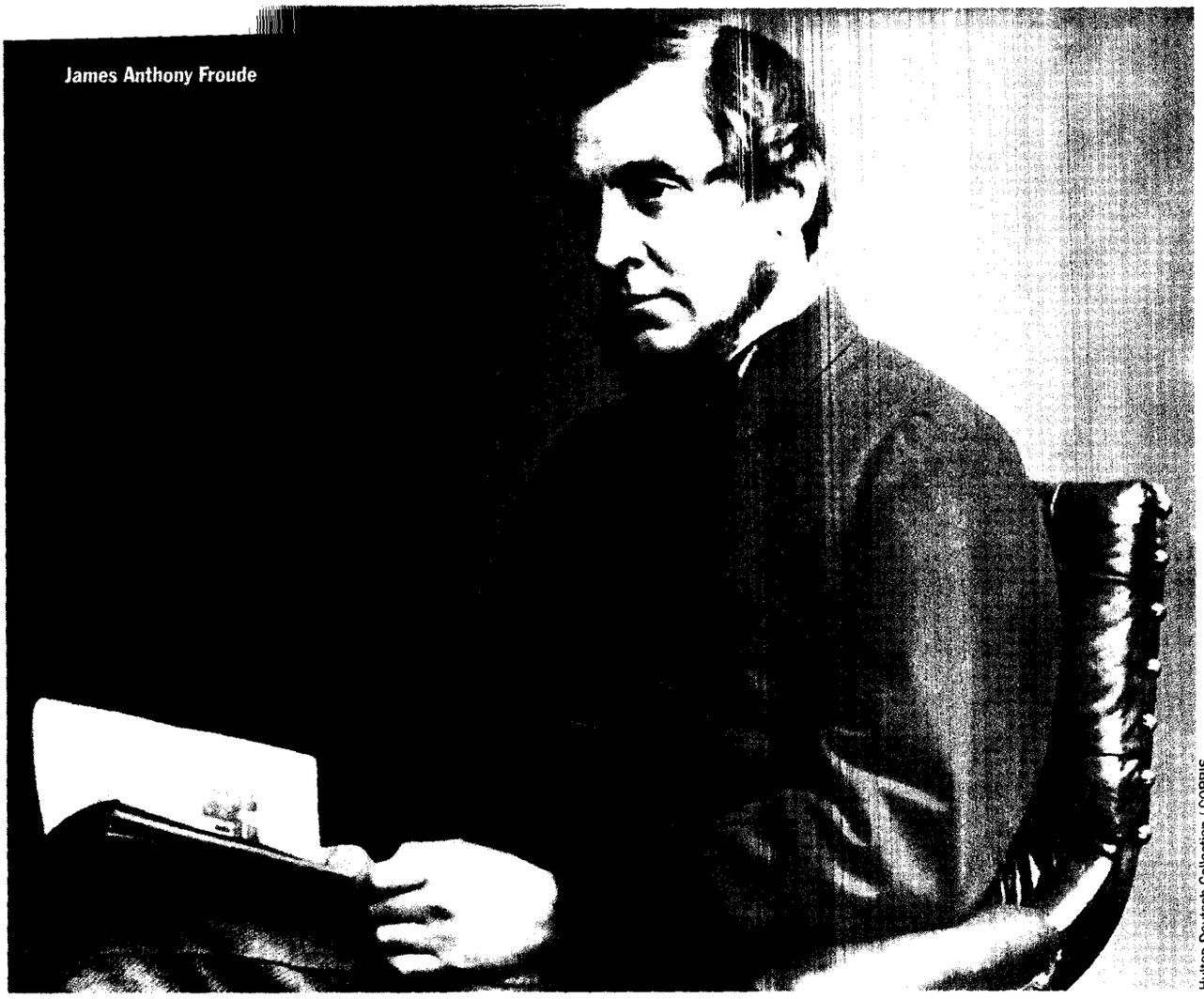
James Anthony Froude

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Victorian Worthy

The historian as controversialist By Gertrude Himmelfarb

"How delicate, decent, is English biography, bless its mealy mouth." That was Thomas Carlyle in 1838, complaining of the hostile reception of a biography of Sir Walter Scott. The book had been criticized, Carlyle said, for being excessively "communicative, indiscreet," recording facts that should have "lain suppressed," mentioning circumstances "not always of an ornamental sort," and revealing the "sanctities of private life."

In fact, Victorian biographies were not nearly as mealy-mouthed as Carlyle thought, if only because their subjects themselves were often so indiscreet. Ruskin did not conceal from his intimates his sexual disposition (or lack thereof), which was made public when his marriage was annulled on the grounds of nonconsummation. Gladstone made no secret of his habit of picking up prostitutes in the street and bringing them home, where his wife plied them with hot chocolate while he tried to persuade them of the errors of their ways. And he carefully marked in his diary (which he then preserved) with the symbol of a whip those occasions when he felt obliged to flagellate himself because of some "filthiness of spirit." The Reverend Charles Kingsley sent letters to his future wife with sketches of them as naked lovers, and wrote novels celebrating sexuality when he was not otherwise engaged in tending to his parishioners and promoting Christian socialism. Robert Browning's letters to Elizabeth Barrett during their courtship, containing passionate declarations of love and disquieting

J. Anthony Froude
The Last Undiscovered Great Victorian
by Julia Markus
Scribner's, 340 pp., $30

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revelations about her father, were handed over to his son, and thence to biographers.

So, too, Carlyle provided the autobiographical material that made his biography anything but delicate and decent. And he chose a biographer who was himself notably indiscreet about his own private life, who had published barely disguised autobiographical novels that created a sensation at the time (and who later, like Carlyle, left to his heirs, and biographers, manuscripts of an even more revealing kind). James Anthony Froude is now remembered primarily as Carlyle's biographer. That hardly does justice to the author of the 12-volume *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada* (12 volumes for a period of 58 years), three volumes on the English in Ireland in the 18th century, several volumes of essays on historical subjects, numerous other books, and, of course, the much discussed and much controverted four-volume biography of Thomas Carlyle.

Nor is the subtitle of the latest biography by Julia Markus, *The Last Undiscovered Great Victorian*, accurate. Great? Well, not quite—important, intriguing, provocative, but surely not "great," in the sense in which we use that word of Carlyle himself or of the other greats of Victorian England—Mill, Darwin, Newman, Macaulay . . . And "undiscovered"? The two-volume work by Waldo Hilary Dunn, published in 1961-63, is still the authoritative biography, to which Markus herself, as she acknowledges, is much indebted. That is a "Life and Letters" in the Victorian mode, consisting primarily of manuscript sources (including all those indiscreet memoirs and letters) tied together with only the barest commentary by the biographer. There is also a more recent book by the historian A.L. Rowse, as well as serious essays by other historians and critics. More important, there is the constant flow of reprints of Froude's own works in America as well as England, including the 12 volumes of the *History*.

Then there is the inevitable appelation, "Victorian." Do Froude's revelations of his tortured childhood testify to the underside of the Victorian ethos, the ugly reality barely concealed by a repressive outward propriety and conformity? Or do the revelations themselves—the fact of the revelations—constitute a denial of the Victorian stereotype, of repression and suppression? The story itself, as Froude related it in his reminiscences, reads like something out of a Dickens novel, complete with a severe archdeacon father, an invalid mother, and a truly sadistic brother. Anthony, born in 1818, the youngest of eight children, never really knew his mother because she died when he was two, and his father refused to speak of her or to have a portrait of her (although she was reputed to have been a beauty). Sickly at birth, the child was subjected to such curative measures as being plunged into a gravel pit filled with icy water every morning before breakfast.

"We were a Spartan family," he recalled. But it was more than Spartanism that motivated his brother Hurrell, 15 years older than he, the much loved and indulged first-born, to regale the fearful child with stories of a child-eating monster living just behind the house, or to hold him by the heels upside down in a muddy, toad-filled stream, or to throw him overboard into a river to make him "bold." Just before her death, Mrs. Froude wrote a letter expressing her "uneasiness" about her eldest son (then 17), who was "very much disposed to find his own amusements in teasing and vexing others," and went off happily whistling when she complained of what he blithely called "funny tormenting."

This was the Hurrell Froude who was later a leading figure in the high-church Oxford Movement, a close friend and associate of John Henry Newman. Conscious of his sadistic (and masochistic) predisposition, Hurrell kept his mother's letter (addressed to an unidentified "Sir" but obviously intended for him), rereading it often as a form of self-mortification and repentance. He then left it, with his diary and other manuscripts, to Newman, who chose to print it (with only a few deletions) in the opening pages of the *Remains* of Hurrell Froude, edited by Newman and another colleague in the Movement and published soon after Hurrell's premature death. This was at the very time that Carlyle was complaining about those "mealy-mouthed" biographies.

That year, 1838, was also the beginning of a new life for Anthony Froude. Two years after Hurrell's death, Anthony followed him to Oxford, occupying the rooms at Oriel College once inhabited by his brother and his father before him. College was a blissful release from the purgatory of home. With a newly acquired self-confidence, he applied himself to his studies so successfully that he was awarded a fellowship at Exeter, which carried with it the requirement that he take Orders in the Church; he did so reluctantly, because he had already been attracted to Evangelicalism and was disaffected with orthodox Anglicanism.

Froude also became a friend of Newman, in spite of the fact that he did not share Newman's theological views (and in spite of Newman's close relation to Hurrell). One of the many curiosities in this story is Newman's invitation to him to contribute to his series *Lives of the English Saints*. Newman did not seem to object to the opening remark in Froude's life of St. Neot, informing the reader that the *Lives* were "myths, edifying stories compiled from tradition," rather than literal facts. Nor did he correct those critics who attributed to Froude the final sentence: "This is all, and perhaps more than all, that is known of the life of the blessed St. Neot." In fact, a slight variant of that sentence concluded one of the lives coauthored by Newman himself. In 1845, fulfilling the expectations of many of his critics, Newman became a convert to Roman Catholicism.

The sequel to the Newman-Froude story introduces another eminent Victorian, Charles Kingsley, the low-church practitioner of "Muscular Christianity" and "Christian socialism." In 1864, in the course of a laudatory review of two of the volumes of Froude's *History*, Kingsley took the

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occasion to snipe at Newman, suggesting that, like other of his coreligionists, he had little respect for truth. Those few sentences prompted Newman to write his *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, which created a major controversy at the time and which has since become an enduring document in theological history. Froude's own attitude to the two protagonists in this affair was more subtle and complicated than might have been expected. Although he himself was as far removed as Kingsley from Newman's beliefs, he was entirely respectful of Newman himself, as a person and as a thinker.

Newman, Froude explained to Kingsley, was "a man of most perfect personal truthfulness," but, because "no sane person could ever have divined the workings of his mind," Kingsley and others could well have interpreted him as they did. Twenty years later, Froude returned to the subject, trying to do justice to both men: to Newman whose "whole life had been a struggle for truth," that is, the true relations between man and God, and to Kingsley who had gone through a similar struggle, in his case, seeking to reconcile the truths of religion and science.

Shortly after Newman made his dramatic turn to Catholicism, Froude took exactly the opposite path. Having created a scandal earlier by publishing, under a pseudonym, a fictionalized account of his tormented childhood and school life, he went on to write another barely concealed autobiographical novel, this time under his own name. *The Nemesis of Faith* was, as one reviewer put it, "a manual of infidelity." It related the crisis of faith experienced by the hero as he gradually came to question the credibility of the Bible, the divinity of Christ, and Christianity itself as the vehicle either to salvation or to morality. The protagonist of the novel did not cope with his crisis very well. Froude, more strong-minded, fared better, although the book cost him both his fellowship at Oxford and his inheritance (his father cut him out of his will). It also made him, at the age of 31, something of a celebrity, an outcast among the orthodox (the senior tutor at his own college burnt the book in hall before the assembled students), but a hero to those like George Eliot, who were liberating themselves, as they thought it, from the nemesis of faith.

Thomas Carlyle

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Seven years later, with the appearance of the first two volumes of his magnum opus, Froude found himself involved in another controversy that lasted for the 12 volumes and 14 years of the *History*. (The final volumes appeared in 1870.) If the *Nemesis* was essentially negative in its critique of established religion, the *History* was a positive affirmation of the English Reformation as the most important national as well as religious event in the country's history. The subject may seem esoteric or academic to a later generation, but at the time it was at the heart of some of the major issues that exercised thinkers and even politicians. Froude managed to antagonize most parties in these disputes. Against those conservatives, in the Oxford Movement most notably, who objected to what they took to be the religious excesses of the Reformers, and those liberals who deplored what they saw as the cruel and despotic methods of Henry VIII, Froude vigorously defended both. He later explained that it was "the political and not the theological" aspect of the Reformation that interested him. It was "the grandest achievement in English history" because it not only liberated religion from the tyranny of priests but, more important, liberated England from foreign potentates. Henry's successors very nearly succeeded in undoing that achievement, but Elizabeth confirmed it, revitalizing the English character and intellect and reasserting the "nation's greatness."

Whether because of this message or because of Froude's narrative skill in sustaining the dramatic effect of the story in spite of its length and wealth of detail, the work was a commercial success; the individual volumes as well as the completed work were sold out in their original editions and were quickly reprinted. Yet the reviewers were almost universally hostile. Unimpressed by the large and previously unexplored mass of archival material that Froude drew upon, they complained that he used that material tendentiously and, often, inaccurately. (Then and later, Froude was notoriously careless in transcribing from manuscripts.) His most vitriolic critic was the historian Edward Freeman, who was undeterred by his own confession that he was "profoundly ignorant of the 16th century." (His main work was on the Norman Conquest, which was devoid of archival material and was not without error.) The final irony is that many years later Froude succeeded Freeman as the Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford. The 1911 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* sardonically commented on that appointment: "Except for a few Oxford men, who considered

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that historical scholarship should have been held to be a necessary qualification for the office, his appointment gave general satisfaction." (This sentence was removed from later, more sedate editions.)

Some of the hostility was clearly political. Froude, like Freeman (and Macaulay as well), wrote history in the familiar Victorian mode, in which "past politics," as has been said, was a barely disguised form of "present politics." Certainly the idea of a "great" England, an imperial England, was anathema to the "little Englandism" of Gladstone and his party. And liberals were hardly reassured by Froude's insistence that that greatness could never have been brought about by modern constitutional methods.

"To the last," Froude later reflected, "up to the defeat of the Armada, manhood suffrage in England would at any moment have brought back the Pope." Such sentiments were hardly to the liking of liberals at the time, or of most historians since. Yet it is interesting that G.P. Gooch, a capital-L Liberal (he was briefly in Parliament) as well as a reputable historian, judged the first part of the *History* "the most brilliant historical work produced in England in the middle of the century, with the single exception of Macaulay," and the work as a whole (although with many faults) "the first by a single hand . . . of one of the most critical periods of our history." More recently, Rowse, a Tory, pronounced Froude a "historian of genius."

Four years after the appearance of the last of the *History* volumes, Froude published the even more provocative three-volume *The English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*. Undertaken on the urging of Carlyle, it reflected Carlyle's view that the English should have pursued an even more vigorous policy of Protestantizing Ireland and should have abstained from the few concessions toward Catholics that were later made. At a time when Home Rule was becoming the battle cry of liberals, Froude opened his work with what amounted to a declaration of war: "On the whole, and as a rule, superior strength is the equivalent of superior merit; and when a weaker people are induced or forced to part with their separate existence, and are not treated as subjects, but are admitted freely to share the privileges of the nation in which they are absorbed, they forfeit nothing which they need care to lose, and rather gain than suffer by the exchange."

Yet the following year, after returning from a trip to South Africa and delivering a report that pleased neither party, Froude was approached by Liberals to stand for Parliament in a secure Liberal seat. Disraeli personally urged him to accept the invitation, promising not to put up a Conservative candidate in opposition on the assumption that, on most issues, Froude would support his policies. Froude admitted as much when he explained to Lady Derby that he was "neither Conservative nor Liberal per se, but would not oppose Mr. Disraeli," at the same time suggesting that he would "stand on the Conservative side, if any." In fact, the Conservatives never invited him to stand and he never served in Parliament.

Froude was not a plausible parliamentary candidate, any more than Carlyle would have been. They were both too passionate in their views and much too idiosyncratic. Contemporary critics who saw in Froude's writings the fine hand of Carlyle were quite right. Later historians inevitably recall Carlyle's *History of the French Revolution* (published 20 years earlier) when they speak of Froude's *History of England*, and Carlyle's six-volume life of Frederick the Great, which preceded Froude's four-volume life of Carlyle (again, by about 20 years). Carlyle himself took the first steps toward his own biography by providing the autobiographical material upon which much of it (and the more sensational parts of it) was to be based.

The death of Jane Carlyle in 1866 brought about something like a *crise de conscience* in her husband. He immediately set about writing an account, almost in the form of a confession, of their difficult marriage: of his failures as a husband (not the nonconsummation of their marriage—that was left to Froude to reveal after his own death), his ill treatment of his wife (mental and moral although, others suspected, physical as well), and her acute unhappiness. He also set about collecting her letters (she was a brilliant and prolific correspondent), some of which were equally candid and troubling. He later turned over all this material to Froude, in effect designating him his biographer and literary executor. Froude interpreted the instruction to use it at his discretion as tantamount not only to permission to publish but also as an expectation that Froude would do so, else why collect and preserve those documents and bequeath them to a friend who was also a professional writer?

It was thus that Froude became irrevocably identified with Carlyle, so that today he has almost no existence save as his biographer—and, some think, denigrator. A month after Carlyle's death in 1881, Froude published the two volumes of Carlyle's *Reminiscences*, which created a sensation; Carlyle's revelations about his marriage were compounded by acerbic comments about his contemporaries. The following year, dismayed but not deterred by the hostile reception given that work, Froude published the first two volumes of his own biography of Carlyle. The quotation from Carlyle, in the introduction, about mealy-mouthed biographies was an obvious, but futile, attempt to forestall criticism. The next year Froude published the three volumes of Jane Carlyle's *Letters and Memorials*, and the year after that the final two volumes of his biography of Carlyle.

Quite apart from the merits of these works—and they were all eminently readable as well as instructive—these nine volumes testify to Froude's extraordinary literary facility and productivity. He himself intended them as homage to a man whom he regarded as one of England's greatest thinkers, and whom he was proud to claim as a mentor and friend. But critics saw them as a betrayal of confidence and a sensationalist exploitation of friendship. The affair very nearly ruined Froude's personal as well as professional life, involving him in scandal and even lawsuits, and becoming an obsession as

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he endlessly agonized over his decision to write and publish books that brought him so much grief.

There was something "demonic," Froude once said of the Carlyles, and it was as if that demon had taken possession of Froude as well. Just as Carlyle wrote a memoir to come to terms with his relations with his wife, so Froude wrote one to justify his relations with Carlyle. And just as Carlyle bequeathed his memoir to Froude to be published after his death, so Froude left his to his children. Published after his death, it was received with the familiar criticisms and recriminations. Among other things, it recounted, in even starker form, Jane Carlyle's misery and disclosed what the biography had only hinted at (and what some of their acquaintances knew), Carlyle's sexual impotence.

Another cache of Froude's manuscripts, the "Autobiographical Fragments," as they have been called, are more than fragmentary; they are carefully composed memories and reflections totaling almost a hundred tightly printed pages relating the story of Froude's childhood and early life. In periods of delirium toward the end of this life, Froude implored his daughter to destroy them, fearing that they, too, like the Carlyle books, would be used to vilify him. His daughter, predictably, preserved them, and turned them over to his biographer, Waldo Hilary Dunn, who incorporated them (not in snippets but in long extracts) in his biography.

This mass of autobiographical material is so revealing that there is little left for a biographer to reveal—and so well-written, too; a biographer is hard put to compete with such an autobiographer. What the biographer can do, however, is to explore the ideas and writings that made these people important in their time and challenging in ours. This task Markus, like Dunn before her, has shirked. Her account of Froude's personal life is interesting, because his life was interesting, and some of the leading intellectuals of the time make their appearances as characters in that life: Newman, Kingsley, Ruskin, George Eliot, even Gladstone and Disraeli. But there is only the most superficial treatment of the ideas that brought them into Froude's orbit, either as admirers or as deriders.

The description, for example, of the *Tracts* inaugurating the Oxford Movement—"intent on purging the Protestant elements of the Church of England, and thereby returning the church to its earlier authoritarian, Catholic roots"—hardly does justice either to the adherents of the movement or to its critics. (Dunn's comment on Froude's attitude toward the Reformation is not much better: "As a decent family man, Froude naturally objected to a celibate clergy"—but not, evidently, to a promiscuous monarch.)

John Henry Newman

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We are told much about the reception of *Nemesis* and its effect on Froude's life and career, but too little about the book itself, so that we cannot understand why that "manual of infidelity" took so kindly a view of Newman. The most conspicuous failure is the account of the *History*, the 12 volumes of which are represented by four brief quotations totaling six sentences. One of Froude's lesser books, on the other hand, *Oceana*, about his tour of South Africa, Australia, and the United States, is treated more amply—and respectfully. Froude's imperialist views are said to reflect his "deeply felt patriotism." But imperialism itself is given an oddly modern gloss, as if what was important about it was the fact that "many of the natives of the colonized countries of the 19th century have become emigrants" in the 20th century, thus prefiguring the "diversity throughout the Western world."

The book concludes on a peculiarly inept and jarring note. After remarking upon Froude's great admiration for American democracy, and for the Puritan spirit that put "duty, community, and country beyond material gain" (Markus's words), and quoting Froude's own words to an American publisher—"When I am most despondent about the future of mankind I can always comfort myself in thinking of America"—Markus wonders what he would say of America today: "About greed, corruption, globalization, the immense disparity between the captains of industry (CEOs) and the ruthless downsizing of their work-forces. Has all this brought us to the edge of the decline of yet another Roman republic, as he saw was the case with all democracies?"

"Perhaps," Markus continues, "it is time to read Froude again." Yes, indeed. Another reading of Froude might well find in him quite another view of present-day America and, more important, restore him to a Victorian England that was more varied, vigorous, and contentious than the stereotype would have it. Froude once wrote a stirring essay, "England's Forgotten Worthies," celebrating the voyagers and explorers of Elizabethan England. So Froude deserves to be remembered, not, to be sure, as an Eminent Victorian, but as an eminently Worthy Victorian. ♦

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Hipster Forster

All that's good, and not so good, about a rising star. **BY CLIVE DAVIS**

Is there an editor in the house? If you are afflicted by the fogeyish notion that the red pencil has fallen out of fashion in today's publishing firms, you had best avoid the page-long acknowledgments at the beginning of Zadie Smith's third novel. *Howards End*, which provides the explicit inspiration for *On Beauty*, was content to introduce itself with that brief but celebrated admonition: "Only connect." Smith's effusions ("Thank you, George. You're a bobby dazzler . . . ") are much more reminiscent of the interminable hugs and kisses that adorn albums by contemporary R&B singers. "Blessings on Tishawna, my inspirational manicurist . . ." You know the kind of thing.

On Beauty
by Zadie Smith
Penguin, 464 pp., $25.95

"Thank you to India Knight and Elisabeth Merriman for all the French." (India Knight being one of Britain's most fashionable newspaper columnists.) "All the French" might imply that we are about to encounter acres of Gallic prose. In fact, I would calculate that the entire amount comes to not much more than half a page of unexceptional conversation. While I don't begrudge India and Elisabeth their chance of literary immortality, the assignment fell quite a way short of a volume of Proust.

Why dwell on such trivial points? Well, simply because *On Beauty* is an immensely interesting novel that would have been even more satisfying if Smith had reined in her extraordinarily fluent muse. Rightly short-listed for this year's Man Booker Prize, her meditation on race, class, and the academic life makes most British novels seem flat-footed.

Clive Davis writes for the Times *of London.*

There is a genuine, restless intelligence at work here. There's no question that her debut, the even more garrulous *White Teeth*, benefited from a blast of multi-culti-tinged hype. Young, female, photogenic, Cambridge-educated, streetwise, and "urban" (or "half-urban," to borrow a euphemism from that magnificent sitcom *The Larry Sanders Show*), Smith was very much a publicist's dream. Yet for all the adulation, she has demonstrated a refreshing measure of self-awareness, assessing her first book's shortcomings in sometimes brutally dismissive terms. Refusing to be seduced by the media storm—even though she is happy to pose for the ritual glossy magazine photographs—she has managed to avoid being distracted from the harsh business of getting words down on the page.

On the face of it, her decision to transplant the drama and mores of E.M. Forster's era to the modern day might seem to be fraught with problems. "One may as well begin with Helen's letters to her sister," runs Forster's opening sentence. Smith's first line is almost identical, only now we live in an age where we dash off emails, sometimes with smiley-face symbols attached. A sense of clever, undergraduate pastiche hangs in the air, but only for a moment or two. Using Forster's storyline as a loose framework, Smith ingeniously creates a self-sufficient work that gives off no odor of late nights in the research library.

True, it's quite possible to spend the entire novel ticking off references to Forster: an al fresco Mozart Requiem takes the place of Beethoven at the Queen's Hall; the humble clerk Leonard Bast, eager to acquire Culture with a capital "C," becomes a lithe street rapper; Leonard's lost umbrella, which becomes his calling card, as it were, to higher social circles, is magically transformed into a Discman. And so on. Yet most of Smith's characters, inhabitants of a well-to-do New England college town, are every bit as rounded as Forster's own creations, and if their conversation about sex, money, and prestige seems, at first sight, so much cruder, we soon realize that their lives are encumbered by unspoken social protocols that are every bit as complex as the Edwardian codes that the Schlegel sisters knew so well.

As in *Howards End*, we become acquainted with two contrasting families. Art historian Howard Belsey, white English and conventionally left wing, is married to an African-American earth-mother, Kiki. Jaded and frustrated—he has been denied tenure year after year and his book on Rembrandt seems a perpetual work-in-progress—Howard has already come close to destroying his marriage as the result of an affair. With the arrival on campus of an old antagonist, the lofty, Trinidad-born conservative Monty Kipps (a bluff mixture, if you will, of V.S. Naipaul and Thomas Sowell), Howard, Kiki, and their teenage children are beguiled and repelled by an entirely alien value system.

Smith's extraordinarily sharp eye catches all the racial nuances as Kiki and her offspring interact with the aristocratic Kippses and the poor, ill-educated Haitians who serve as the town's hewers of wood and drawers of water. Just as, decades ago, the Jamaican Claude McKay portrayed the tensions that exist between black Americans and people of Caribbean descent, so Smith peers beneath the rhetoric of ethnic unity.

Class looms as an equally important factor. Whether they like it or not, status and spending power have a habit of forcing their way into the most high-minded conversation. As Margaret

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Zadie Smith

CORBIS / Colin McPherson

Schlegel declares to her aunt in *Howards End*, "You and I and the Wilcoxes stand upon money as upon islands. It is so firm beneath our feet that we forget its very existence. It's only when we see someone near us tottering that we realize all that an independent income means. . . . I'm tired of these rich people who pretend to be poor, and think it shows a nice mind to ignore the piles of money that keep their feet above the waves."

If *On Beauty* sometimes has the faintly claustrophobic aura of a typical academic novel, with its petty professional rivalries, dull faculty meetings, and the even duller sound of people trying to be clever at cocktail parties, Smith casts an astute eye over the different ways the British and Americans negotiate their social hierarchies. Of working-class stock himself, Howard is, in essence, an immigrant twice over. One of his sons, Levi—fascinated by hip-hop culture—strikes the pose of a hardened street hustler, much as members of an earlier generation passed for white. Smith is a much shrewder social critic than anyone of her age has a right to be.

The maturity of her insights is quite startling. If only she could have been persuaded to narrow her sights. Just as *White Teeth* juggles a dizzying parade of ill-assorted characters, so *On Beauty* succumbs to the temptation to paint on an excessively broad canvas. After the first hundred intoxicating pages, the momentum slows, subsidiary figures stroll in and out of vision, and the luxuriant prose proves insufficient compensation for the leisurely pacing. Smith recovers her balance in the final third of the novel (the disintegration of the Belseys' marriage is astutely handled) but there is still no disguising the *longueurs*.

And ultimately, Monty and Howard make too schematic a pairing. It really is hard to summon up much sympathy for the latter's midlife crisis. An empty vessel spouting political pieties and art-school jargon, he is too weak and self-absorbed a figure to carry the burden Smith has placed on him. As for the overbearing, painfully self-assured Monty, enemy of affirmative action and champion of old-fashioned scholarship, he never quite comes into focus. Although he has the makings of a fascinating, larger-than-life figure here, he remains one of those people whose voices, loud and vibrant, you overhear at the edge of a party. The final revelation about his private life seems overly neat and moralistic, too.

The good news is that Smith is too much of a free spirit to make Monty the villain of the piece. In fact, of all the characters, he gets to deliver the most memorable political observations in the book. When Kiki, in a rare moment of intimate conversation with him, indulges in a left-wing rant about the "self-hatred" that is supposed to be the hallmark of black conservatives, Kipps has a ready answer:

> Kiki, if there's one thing I understand about you liberals, it's how much you like to be told a fairytale. You complain about creation myths—but you have a dozen of your own. Liberals never believe that conservatives are motivated by moral convictions as profoundly held as those you liberals profess yourselves to hold. You choose to believe that conservatives are motivated by a deep self-hatred, by some form of . . . psychological flaw. But, my dear, that's the most comforting fairytale of them all!

Ask yourself how often you encounter such sentiments in a contemporary novel, and you begin to realize how rare is Smith's gift for empathy. Besides, while *On Beauty* (which takes its title from an essay by Elaine Scarry) may have its flaws, it is easy to forget that *Howards End* itself can be too much of a good thing at times: all those lush Arcadian rhapsodies can grate on modern ears, as does Forster's unashamedly patronizing depiction of the hapless Leonard.

It is worth bearing in mind, too, that Forster was roughly Smith's age when he published the book. Another decade-and-a-half elapsed before the appearance of his true masterpiece, *A Passage To India*. And after that came nothing, in terms of novels at least, until the posthumous *Maurice*. Smith, still embarking on her journey, has more than enough time on her side. ♦

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Factoids on Parade

Why contemporary history is hard to write. **BY MAX BOOT**

I received this latest volume of the Oxford History of the United States with a mixture of hope and trepidation.

My expectations were high because of the quality of the previous four entries in this series. At least three of them—Robert Middlekauf's *The Glorious Cause* about the American Revolution; James McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom* about the Civil War; and David Kennedy's *Freedom from Fear* about the Great Depression and World War II—have been acknowledged as masterpieces and showered with Pulitzer Prizes and other accolades. Not only are they definitive accounts of their subjects but, in spite of the impeccable professorial pedigrees of the authors, they are also eminently accessible narratives that appeal to the great unwashed mass of plain old history buffs.

Restless Giant
The United States From Watergate to Bush v. Gore
by James T. Patterson
Oxford, 448 pp., $35

My sense of apprehension was due to the fact that the newest volume covers 1974 to 2000—history so recent that partisan passions have not yet had a chance to cool. The result, I feared, would be a political diatribe that would present the history of the past several decades through the prism of trendy academic leftism employing *au courant* terms like "privileged" (used as a verb, not an adjective) and "gendered." I need not have feared—at least not on that score. James T. Patterson may be closely associated with some highly suspect institutions (his title is Ford Foundation Professor Emeritus of History at Brown, which to a conservative sensibility is akin to being Al Franken Professor of Politics at Ben & Jerry's U.), but he has done a scrupulously fair job in *Restless Giant*, as he did in an earlier Oxford installment, *Grand Expectations*, covering 1945-1974.

There are only a few passages that may raise the hackles of conservatives. For instance, he writes that "white flight" to the suburbs in the 1970s "vividly demonstrated the enduring power of racist fears and misunderstandings," seeming to slight the legitimate concerns of people wanting to escape high crime and failing schools. And when discussing Ronald Reagan, he finds "the most remarkable foreign policy achievements of his eight years as president" to be his move in his second term "toward historic accommodations with the Soviet Union." He means the 1987 treaty eliminating intermediate-range Soviet and American missiles from Europe—a mere footnote to Reagan's real achievement, which, as even many onetime critics now acknowledge, was consigning the "evil empire" to the "ash heap of history."

Such lapses aside, Patterson avoids many traps that would have ensnared most other academics writing about recent events. For instance, he acknowledges that affirmative action programs "did little to help the masses of low-income minorities." That it is "difficult to establish a strong and clear causal connection between economic forces and crime rates." That campaign finance reforms such as caps on donations did not have a "significant" impact in reducing the influence of moneyed interests. That voters were won over by Reagan's message, not just "seduced" by "his manner of delivering it." And that Bill Clinton was "unusually self-indulgent, inconsiderate, self-pitying, and narcissistic."

Lest I give the wrong idea through selective quotation, I don't mean to imply that Patterson's book is a sequel to Paul Johnson's unabashedly conservative *A History of the American People*. *Restless Giant* is not conservative. It's not liberal, either. It's not much of anything. That's the problem. Fox News Channel may deliver its "Fair and Balanced" motto with a wink and a nudge, but Patterson takes this injunction seriously. Too seriously. Striving to be fair, he too often becomes banal and platitudinous.

On vital question after vital question, he takes refuge in boring equivocations. "Whether Reagan's economic policies were good for the country was—and is—hard to judge," he writes. In a similar vein, he says of the 1990 budget deal between a Democratic Congress and the first President Bush: "Whether the deal had great economic effects is unclear." No clearer is his judgment on the Millennial generation born after 1982, which was supposedly more conservative than the baby boomers and Gen-Xers: "Whether such generational characterizations held water was hard to say." By the time we reach the controversy over Clinton's 1998 airstrikes on Sudan and Afghanistan, which critics charged were designed to deflect attention from the Monica Lewinsky scandal, it is not surprising to read Patterson's mushy conclusion: "Whether this was so was impossible to prove."

It may, indeed, be impossible to reach definitive conclusions about such recent controversies, but his repeated failure to take a provocative stance—or any stance at all—doesn't make for very scintillating reading. Too often this book reminds me of the stack of old *Newsweeks* that my parents kept in the closet while I was growing up. Reading *Restless Giant* is a lot like leafing through those yellowing magazines, insofar as it consists of a summary of recent events without much new information or analysis that would sur-

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prise anyone who was sentient at the time—which means, for the bulk of this book, anyone older than 30 or so.

The fault may not be entirely Patterson's, since the time period assigned to him by the editors—"The United States from Watergate to Bush *v.* Gore"—does not easily offer a coherent theme. It might have made more sense to focus on 1974-1991—"The End of the Cold War." Or 1980-2001—"America Resurgent." But to make sense of 1974-2000 is not easy, and Patterson does not rise to the challenge. His title, *Restless Giant*, does not tell us anything particularly interesting about this period; it could just as well be applied to almost any other period in American history.

Patterson did better in his previous contribution to this series, *Grand Expectations*, which did offer a relatively clear theme: A booming postwar economy had "stimulated unprecedented and, by the late 1960s, near-fantastic expectations about the Good Life," which helped "to accelerate a rights-consciousness that had always been inherent in American democratic culture."

Lacking an equally coherent theme in his new volume, his narrative too often bogs down in an undifferentiated mass of information. Patterson loves to conjure up endless regiments of facts and figures and send them marching to beat readers into stupefaction. Too often we get sentences such as this: "Of the 107 million households in the country in 2001, 106 million had color televisions (76 million had two or more sets); 96 million, VCR and/or DVD players; 92 million, microwave ovens; 82 million, cable TV; 81 million, either room or central air-conditioning; 79 million, electric or gas clothes dryers; 60 million, personal computers; and 51 million, access to the Internet."

The only thing he left out was the number of kitchen sinks.

The lack of authorial vision makes it hard for him to separate the transcendent from the trivial. In over 400 pages Patterson has almost nothing to say about how the American military got back on its feet after the Vietnam war—a subject central to the history of the last quarter-century. The earth-shaking developments of 1989-1992—from the reunification of Germany to the collapse of the Soviet Union—are briefly summarized in a manner that conveys none of the drama of those crucial years. But he somehow works in a reference not only to *RoboCop*, a 1987 action flick of no particular significance, but also to "its shoddier sequels, *RoboCop2* (1990) and *RoboCop3* (1991)." Attention to popular culture can make for an interesting analysis of American society, but Patterson is usually satisfied with long lists of movies or TV shows, introduced by a few perfunctory comments about the public's appetite for "gore and ghoulishness" or about its equally strong desire for "inoffensive stuff."

One might be tempted to conclude from the shortcomings of *Restless Giant* that it's a fool's errand to write a history of "the present." It is, indeed, harder in many ways than writing about the long-ago past, since we lack much perspective on our own time; but it's far from impossible. What it takes is either a vivid narrative (Mark Bowden's *Black Hawk Down*) or a provocative argument (Robert Samuelson's *The Good Life and Its Discontents*). Unfortunately, Patterson's book falls short on both counts.

The good news is that the Oxford history, which began appearing in 1982, remains only half complete. There is good reason to hope that the remaining five installments, which do not face the burden of making sense of our own times, will come closer to the stratospheric standards of the earlier works. ♦

The 'Laugh-In' Girl

Goldie Hawn on life, Elvis, and transformational breathing. **BY JUDY BACHRACH**

Goldie
A Lotus Grows in the Mind
by Goldie Hawn
Putnam, 446 pp., $25.95

This is not so much an autobiography written by Goldie Hawn as the life lessons the actress wishes to impart to those of us who really, really liked her in *Private Benjamin*, in which she played a spoiled Jewish girl with a lot to learn. In other words, the actress born in Takoma Park, Maryland (an area Goldie aptly dubs "the holy grail of my mind"), is trading on the ditsy blonde charm that brought her to the screen in order to promote the notion that she is now, 60 years into her existence, perfectly poised to become our spiritual instructor.

This ambition is clearly hard-won. But then Goldie is at least as fit for the job as some of her past associations: the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, before whose picture she recites a mantra, which "tickles my joy center"; a California woman who produces rebirths through a process Goldie calls "transformational breathing"; and an analyst who makes sure she enrolls "in the University of Goldie Hawn," which was, as things turned out, "the best college I ever attended."

What are we to make of this turnabout? Well, like most Goldie movies, it has a happy ending. The girl who began her career go-go dancing on tabletops has at last found a steady partner and walked it home. "Life is a dance with the Cosmos," Goldie explains. It lives either "in the flicker

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'Private Benjamin' (1980)

Bettmann / CORBIS

of an eye" or in its country house, "a bubble in the stream."

These life lessons are many and solemn, generally consigned—in order to differentiate them from the chronological passages—to pages in the book tinted pale gray, which pop up always when least expected, brightened with rosy pink blobs. When you hit a gray-pink blob page, you can tell a mile off that Goldie is definitely not going to finish the story she launched earlier on white pages of why she left, more than three decades ago, the hit TV show *Laugh-In*, where she played an empty-headed giggler who flubbed her lines, but is instead going to offer us, say, "A poem I wrote the night Elvis died," which contains these tender but obscure lines: "His lover shot a dart through his tender heart / He tumbled to the ground hoping he'd be found." As Elvis died on the toilet, I didn't fully understand this tribute. Perhaps what Goldie is really saying is that a lotus also expires in the mud.

Anyway, there seems to be a pretty big disconnect between the insights the star actually provides and the questions movie fans hope might be answered here. For example, you might wonder: How much of a settlement did Goldie really have to shell out when she split from Gus Trikonis, who was husband number one? Is the phrase "He never supported me a day in his life!"—uttered right after the judicial decree—spiritually worthy of someone who believes life is but a bubble in the stream? Roommate Kurt Russell: real hunk or real Neanderthal? Perky daughter Kate Hudson: how did Goldie feel when her kid married rock star Chris Robinson, an avowed pothead 13 years her senior who graced the cover of *High Times*?

I wish Goldie had dwelt on all these issues—hell, I'd have been happy with just one—but Chris goes unmentioned, and practically the only reference we get on the subject of Kate is "A poem to my unborn daughter," which begins, unfortunately, "Oh heart beat in my womb . . ."

And let's say you were interested in finding out whether Goldie, like the actress character she played in the 1996 hit *The First Wives Club*, has had a few facelifts, as scurrilous Hollywood gossip suggests, or at least is thinking about taking the plunge and, to that end, saving her pennies. Here you might be disappointed. Of course, it's likely that Goldie's reticence on both subjects stems from the same issue: She didn't want to do *First Wives Club* because it hit too close to home. But that isn't the only film ignored. So is *Shampoo*, where Goldie was really quite touching as Warren Beatty's discarded lover. As for *Private Benjamin*, it is consigned to just a tiny photo caption.

On the other hand, virtually every chapter features a sort of Ripley's compendium of Goldie nuggets, many of them attributed to a field the actress consistently refers to as "science."

"I even dabble in quantum physics," Goldie writes, which is a statement you'll simply have to take on faith. But most of her research, it turns out, centers on the human brain. This is not good news. Thus: "We are all made up of waves of energy. The neurons that are constantly firing in our brains have small tentacles called 'dendrites.' . . . Scientists have now learned that these little radios can pick up information—even other people's thoughts."

I guess that's my favorite passage from the book, in part because it is topped off by another scientific conclusion: "The brain is awesome."

More than awesome, if you stop and think about it. For instance, Goldie also writes that "the new brain—the prefrontal cortex that scientists have only recently discovered," can actually understand that we no longer "have to fear being eaten by saber-toothed tigers." Which just goes to show how evolved she is. Moreover, she realizes that, even if attacked by something saber-toothed, there is no cause for alarm because "we are all miracle workers, and we can all heal others." (Like so many infomercials featuring actresses, however, this one comes with a warning label: "Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't.")

Small matter. Goldie has other gifts. She tries to save elephants in India and children from Peru. One can even believe, sort of, her contention that she "never aspired to be a movie star, rich or famous." She was always nice to her late mother, a famous harpy, and to her father, a violinist who didn't much like her mother. She still loves Takoma Park, and whenever the spirits move her, which is now and then, returns (much to the astonishment of the current occupant) to her childhood home. She never once told us whom to vote for or which war to protest—and for an actress, this is self-abnegation indeed.

If only she'd applied the same restraint to her spiritual journeys. It might have been better—and not only for Goldie. But for Elvis. ♦

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Everett Collection

Terence Stamp as 'Billy Budd' (1962)

Writer in Crisis

Reopening the case of Herman Melville.

BY EDWIN M. YODER JR.

"All the best critics and literary historians have written about Melville," observes Elizabeth Hardwick in her recent gemlike miniature in the Penguin Lives series.

She is certainly of that company, as is Andrew Delbanco, whose eloquent critical biography continues the best traditions of humanistic scholarship at Columbia, where he is Levi Professor in the Humanities and director of American Studies. And 55 years ago there was one of the earliest of the best, Newton Arvin—and, in between, the labor of many hardworking scholars.

Melville
His World and Work
by Andrew Delbanco
Knopf, 448 pp., $30

Why Melville? What is it about him, even more than such distinguished contemporaries as Hawthorne and Whitman, that has so entranced students of American literature? The mystery is the deeper in that Melville followed his fecund twenties and thirties (when he wrote ten books in a decade including *Moby Dick* at 32) with a silence so prolonged that it has become a literary joke: John Updike's Bech, in the novel of that name, wins the Melville Medal, "awarded every five years to that American author who has maintained the most meaningful silence."

Maybe the answer lies in the work, which, interrupted as it was by long silences and fits of gloom, is formidable. Many still claim, as if it were the first axiom of our literary history, that *Moby Dick* is our greatest novel. Delbanco is more nuanced, calling it "the most ambitious book ever conceived by an American writer."

In the earliest fashion (novels, before visual media and jet travel, brought the *nouvelles*, the news, from afar), the book is didactic to the point of garrulousness on whaling and much else. And in that respect, and others more relevant to good storytelling, its ambition must be granted. So much conceded, some of us would argue that Faulkner's best, notably *Absalom, Absalom!* (also a great tale of obsession), are also in the running. Meanwhile, those who contend that Melville's other indisputably immortal work, the late short novel *Billy Budd*, is the greatest of *its* genre must reckon with Henry James's "The Beast in the Jungle." But after all, *de gustibus* . . .

Melville's experience at sea in his early years was, of course, a trump card. He sailed first as a cabin boy on the whaler *Acushnet* in 1841, barely beyond his teens. Ships, he said, constituted "my Yale College and my Harvard." He grasped the psychology of obsession and gave us an unforgettable portrayal of it in Captain Ahab's pursuit of the white whale that had crippled him.

Moby Dick is a special case, having burst with unexampled radiance, rather like a Mozart symphony, from a body of apprentice work that offered no premonition of the novel or basis for predicting it. *Billy Budd*, brought belatedly to light from a stash of Melville's all-but-forgotten manuscripts some 20 years after his death, is also rich in symbolic power—a memorable study of the deadly peril of "motiveless malignity" to inarticulate innocence. Few writers in English, moreover, are his peers in rhetorical power, which seems to have been radically enhanced when he came by an edition of Shakespeare that didn't strain his eyes. Melville could write of the white whale that it was "one grand hooded phantom, like a snow hill in the air," and of Queequeg's head as a "mildewed skull." And there was much more.

Delbanco's book is subtitled "world and work," appropriately so. He is not only a fine critic; he is also an accomplished historian of the politics and cultural climate of the mid-19th century America that was Melville's working environment. But as Delbanco implicitly concedes, while the circuitry linking a writer's life with his art demands attention, it also can be elusive. Melville's story is interesting, but not terribly revealing. He was well born, and both his grandfathers were Revolutionary war worthies, even heroes. But family decline set in. His father failed in business and died early, when Melville was 13. His mother, of the patroon Gansevoort clan, left to care for eight children, was demanding. Melville's biographers all say that her Dutch Reformed Calvinism left a lasting impress on his sometimes gloomy spirit. His father-in-law, Judge Lemuel Shaw, the chief justice of Massachusetts, was, however, a saint of generosity who often rescued Melville from financial distress.

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When Melville slipped into literary obscurity in his late thirties, friends tried to help. Nathaniel Hawthorne, with whom he had formed his most intensely significant friendship, lobbied President Pierce for an overseas sinecure for Melville—in vain. Melville himself haunted the Lincoln White House in the same fruitless search. Finally, in 1866, he joined the federal Customs Service as an inspector on the New York docks and toiled at this humdrum work for 18 years, at $4 a day.

Meanwhile, the family tragedies continued. His elder son, Malcolm, shot himself at age 18; the younger son, Stanwix, died of consumption in California in obscurity and alienation at 35. Delbanco speculates that the "angelic" Billy Budd may be read, in part, as "an amalgam of Melville's lost sons." Melville's personal history is, then, largely a chronicle of isolation, poverty, and long silences. When he visited Hawthorne in England in 1856, on a journey to the Middle East, the elder writer worried about Melville's "morbid state of mind." Hawthorne likened his friend's anguish to "deserts, as dismal and monotonous as the sand hills amid which we were sitting. He can neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief."

It was the common Victorian spiritual crisis, no doubt given a special twist by the depth of his morbid sensibility.

Delbanco and Hardwick are among those critics who are ever mindful—an attribute of their first-ratedness—of how much we don't know, and probably can't know, about the inwardness of genius. Delbanco, accordingly, negotiates the world-work relationship with delicacy and respect for the mysteries of creativity. He also knows his history, and his account of how, for instance, the crisis of 1850 affected Melville lends his book an uncommon richness of historical texture.

At key points in Melville's career, however, the circuits that connect life and art are similarly shrouded. A handy litmus test is Newton Arvin's study of 1950, written excitedly at the high tide of the New Criticism. It shows, by contrast, how the certainties of literary detection have faded. Arvin writes boldly of how this or that experience explains this or that personality trait or this or that piece of writing. And there are revealing contrasts of judgment. *Moby Dick* and *Billy Budd* stand unshaken as consensus favorites. Beyond those works, dissidence sets in. Delbanco extols *Benito Cereno*, a story of slave mutiny at sea that he more than once labels "great." Arvin dismisses it as "an artistic miscarriage." Delbanco finds Melville's late philosophical verse-novel, *Clarel*, "hopelessly talky" with "weariness in every line." For Arvin it was "an extraordinary work, a very full and rich expression of Melville's later intellectual life."

Divergence of judgment is to be expected; but these differences testify also to the instability of Melville's critical reputation, making his persistence in the critical and historical spotlight the more paradoxical.

When it comes to the life/work synapse, there will always be speculation, adept and silly; and Delbanco and Hardwick, in shorter scope, offer important correctives. Melville has been overserved of late by those who see veiled homosexuality in practically any scene of 19th-century male bonding. *Billy Budd* has been subjected to pacifist execration by critics who don't concede that command on a warship in wartime imposes harsher choices than those facing civilian lawgivers. In one biography, Captain Vere is condemned as a martinet, commanding a "totalitarian" ship.

No such nonsense from Delbanco. He renders one's irritation at critical brazenness and biographical glibness unnecessary. The best critics still teach old, essential lessons about the delicate ties between life and art. And in a happy reversal of Gresham's law, the best vanquish the worst. ♦

Victory at Sea

How the Greeks kept the Persians at bay.

BY CHARLOTTE ALLEN

As Barry Strauss, a classicist and historian at Cornell, informs us on the very first page, this is a book about triremes, the battleships of the ancient world that helped the Greeks defeat the Persians in a key sea battle off the island of Salamis near Athens in 480 B.C.

The Battle of Salamis
The Naval Encounter That Saved Greece—And Western Civilization
by Barry Strauss
Simon & Schuster, 294 pp., $25

The name "trireme" refers to the three stacked decks of oars and oarsmen, 170 in all, that made the fragile wooden boats, each about 130 feet long, highly maneuverable and, for the time, exceedingly fast (top speed: 10 knots). So when I first opened this book, I was a bit fearful, thinking it was probably pitched at maritime obsessives, the kind of hyperinformed autodidacts who argue about whether the rigging in the movie version of *Master and Commander* was authentic to the Napoleonic Wars, or didn't come in until the Battle of Navarino.

And even though I was a classics double-major in college, time has obliterated part of my brain, and I've had a hard time remembering why the Battle of Salamis was such an important event in the Persian-Greek wars compared with, say, the Battle of Marathon (490 B.C.), in which Pheidippides sped 26.2 miles on foot to announce victory, and so launched a thousand AIDS runs, or

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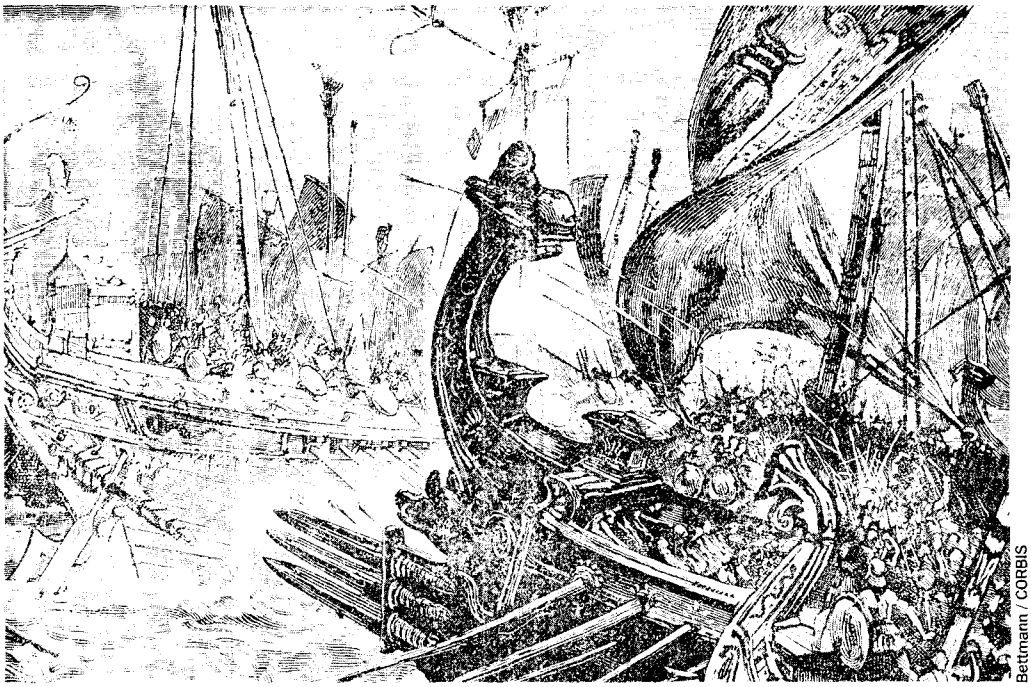
the Battle of Thermopylae (480 B.C., a month before Salamis), in which 300 Spartans fought to the last man against tens of thousands of Persians in a Greek version of the Alamo. And "Saved . . . Western Civilization," as the book's subtitle promises? So many battles have saved Western civilization, from Chalons to Midway.


Bettmann / CORBIS

The Battle of Salamis

A few pages into *The Battle of Salamis*, however, and I was enthralled. Strauss's book is a gripping account of the events leading up to (and also the aftermath of) September 25, 480, when 371 Greek triremes and other ships, more than half supplied by the city-state of Athens, trapped and defeated a Persian fleet more than three times as large. Strauss has ransacked every cranny of relevant learning to shed light upon his tale. He draws not only upon the accounts of Herodotus, his main source, who recorded the battle in his *Histories* some 50 years later, and of Aeschylus, who actually fought at Salamis and turned his memories into a drama, *The Persians*, but also upon ancient shipbuilding, geography, and even what the weather was probably like on that distant autumn day: what time the sun set, the direction of the breezes, which constellations were visible in the sky.

The rowers, lower-class men who could not afford the armor of their social betters on land, and whose "uniform" was a loincloth, are the unsung heroes of Salamis, in Strauss's view. He informs us what they ate for their meals (a blah diet of salt fish and barley-groats), how they went to the bathroom (they mostly didn't because they sweat so much, but when they did, it was right at the oar), and where they slept (ashore, because the tightly packed triremes had no space for bunks).

Where the ancient sources are contradictory or silent, Strauss does not hesitate to fill in the blanks with "We may imagine . . . "—but his imaginings are solidly anchored in archaeology and classical literature. He dresses Artemisia, queen of Halicarnassus in western Anatolia, and the sole female commander in Xerxes' fleet, in jewelry excavated from an actual Halicarnassian tomb. He borrows the rhythmic cries of the rowers as they kept time on the triremes from the croaks of the ranids in Aristophanes' *The Frogs*. Furthermore, Strauss never lets us forget that 5th-century Greeks were both familiar figures who invented our own democratic institutions and, at the same time, intractably strange. They fought in clanking bronze armor like Homeric heroes, and the night before Salamis, so Herodotus reports, they offered human sacrifices of prisoners to the gods.

As in Herodotus' *Histories*, the Battle of Salamis in Strauss's version is a montage of vivid personalities, starting with Xerxes himself. The Greeks called the Persians *barbaroi*, but it was the Persians who had the largest, wealthiest, and most culturally sophisticated empire in the ancient world, having swallowed up Egypt, Anatolia, the Levant, and Central Asia all the way to the Indus River. The Persians even had superior triremes: sleek vessels crafted by Phoenicians, master-seafarers, "swordfish," as Strauss calls them, to the Greeks' blunt-nosed "sharks." The Greeks were the barbarians in Persian eyes, a poor, upstart, and usually disunited clump of city-states standing in the way of the Persian kings' attempts to push their western frontier into Europe.

Xerxes' father, Darius, had made one such effort and been rebuffed by the Athenians at Marathon. Xerxes' score-settling second invasion 10 years later was actually a huge success, at least on land. His polyglot army, formed from his various subject nations, not only trounced the Spartans at Thermopylae but sacked Athens itself, burning the Acropolis to the ground. Fortunately, the Athenians had evacuated the city and moved most of their population—along with the Greek fleet—to Salamis, which lay along the coastline of the Saronic Gulf, to the city's west.

The trick was to lure the Persian fleet, moored safely downshore in Phaleron Bay, up into the narrow straits alongside Salamis, where it could be trapped and destroyed. Fortunately, the Athenians had a match for Xerxes in the veteran warrior and politician, Themistocles, a relentless promoter of the Greek navy who talked its reluctant commander, a Spartan named Eurybiades, into taking a stand at sea despite the uneven match of forces. Manipulative and duplicitous Themistocles first enticed the Persians to Salamis by sending a slave posing as a traitor to Xerxes informing him that the Greek fleet was in full retreat and could be pursued.

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Then Themistocles bluffed the quarreling Greek city-states into hanging together by threatening a pullout by Athens if they did not.

The double ruse worked. The Persian ships quietly moved up to the harbor at Salamis during the night of September 24. There at dawn their rowers, exhausted after a night's work, were surprised by a Greek fleet that was rested and bristling for battle. Combat was hand-to-hand and by javelin and arrows, but it mostly consisted of the triremes' ramming each other's sterns to break the fragile ships to pieces, then returning later to slaughter any survivors. Artemisia saved her own warship from a Greek attack by turning and ramming one of her Persian allies. Afterwards she lied to Xerxes, who had been watching the sea-battle from a throne set up onshore, that the ship she had rammed actually belonged to the Greeks. When the battle ended after 7 P.M. that night, some 20,000 Persians were dead, Strauss estimates, including most of their commanders.

The victory at Salamis left many loose strands untied. It was "a Greek Gettysburg; it was not Appomattox Court House," Strauss writes. The Greeks did not entirely evict the Persians until a decisive win on land the next year at Plataea in Boeotia, to the north of Athens. Persia then retreated for good from Europe, but it remained the ancient world's richest empire for more than a century until it was conquered by Alexander the Great. At home, the other Greek city-states resented the now-dominant Athens, and the Athenians resented Themistocles, whom they regarded as too clever by half. They eventually ostracized and exiled him, at which point the wily politician switched sides and presented himself at the court of Xerxes' son, Artaxerxes I, who gave him a swath of Anatolia to govern.

Had the Greeks lost at Salamis, Strauss points out, the defeat would not have been fatal to their culture, for there were Greek settlers all over the Mediterranean, especially in Italy and Sicily. Still, the uniquely Athenian contribution to that culture never would have been: the Acropolis gloriously rebuilt by Pericles (a teenager at Salamis), the wealth of Greek drama, the flowering of philosophy, the short-lived robustness of Athenian democracy.

That democratic and individualistic streak in Greek culture ultimately led to the Greek city-states' fragmentation and undoing, but it also helped them fend off a mighty Persian military whose commanders, as Strauss notes, "fought mainly to impress Xerxes" and had "little incentive to fight to the death." The Greeks had every incentive to fight to the death for what they cherished, and their victory at Salamis indeed saved Western civilization, at least as we know it now. ♦

The Honorary Roosevelt

From Park Avenue to the Arizona desert, and back. **BY NOEMIE EMERY**

If Theodore Roosevelt had been born a woman, he would have been Isabella Selmes Ferguson Greenway, an unjustly unknown contemporary of his daughters and nieces, who led a life fit for three blockbuster movies, with a novel or six thrown in.

Isabella Greenway
An Enterprising Woman
by Kristie Miller
Arizona, 307 pp., $24.95

Those daughters and nieces—Alice and Eleanor, among a less-well-known but equally impressive and feisty collection—were no slouches themselves, but none quite had the bizarre mixture of privilege and extreme physical hardship, along with such heart-pounding, heart-breaking romance. Two of Greenway's best friends were Eleanor, and her cousin Corinne, daughter of TR's kid sister. Her first two husbands were Rough Riders who had been with TR in Cuba during his "crowded hour." And as detailed in this new biography by Kristie Miller, most of her hours also were crowded, with a series of incidents that beggar belief.

Isabella herself was an honorary Roosevelt; in fact, TR had known her from birth. He had met her parents in Mandan, North Dakota, where he had fled following the deaths of his first wife and his mother, and where he found her mother "seductive," and dandled Isabella as a four-month-old tot. Then he went back to New York, married again, had four other children (after Alice, whose birth killed her mother), and resumed the political career that, by 1900, would make him vice president.

Isabella stayed in the West in obscurity. But her life changed in 1901, when she and her mother came to live in New York with relatives, not far from the Roosevelt homestead at Sagamore Hill on Long Island, just as Roosevelt (on William McKinley's death) became president, and vaulted the girl who was born in the Badlands into the center of the country's social and political life. In 1905, as Miller tells us, Greenway attended a ball given by *the* Mrs. Astor, at which "six hundred guests passed through a foyer filled with poinsettias and Easter lilies, palm trees and roses, (and) then assembled for dancing in an immense ballroom, its walls covered with paintings. . . . Supper was served in an ebony and gold dining room. . . . This too was like a scene from an Edith Wharton novel; in fact, four days later Edith Wharton invited the young belle to dine."

It was all a long way from Mandan,

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Eleanor Roosevelt, center, Isabella Greenway, right (19:

Bettmann / CORBIS

as was her marriage later that year to Robert H.M. Ferguson, almost 20 years her senior and godfather to TR's children Kermit and Ethel, which established them firmly in New York's upper strata, where they mingled with Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. Three years later, all this indulgence came to an end when Ferguson was diagnosed with tuberculosis and sentenced to a series of out-of-town sanatoriums, where he would live out the rest of his days.

At 22, Isabella packed up her two children and invalid husband and headed to Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks, and began 14 years of struggle, exhaustion, and stress. Two years later, Ferguson had grown worse, and they relocated to a camp near Silver City, New Mexico, where, as Miller says, "camp life was primitive. There were outhouses and no running water; water was caught in tubs as it ran off the roofs of the tents." It was a far cry from Fifth Avenue, and these were trying years, marked by an isolation broken only by visits from various Roosevelts, and a gradual emotional drawing-away from a husband who had, by degrees, stopped being a mate and companion, and become a charge and a duty instead.

During these years, Greenway was often described as being strained, drawn, and burdened, but just when you thought she was becoming a Desperate Housewife, she fell in love with John Greenway, another Rough Rider (and a neighbor in close-by Arizona), who lived 200 miles away. Like a knight in a legend, he promised to wait for her; and so he did, while he went to war, and she nursed a husband, who, after being told of this arrangement, became not unexpectedly still more remote. They married in 1923, a little more than a year after the death of Bob Ferguson, and for more than two years were exceedingly happy. Then John Greenway died from complications of surgery, a week before she miscarried their child, a multiple blow that recalled Theodore's loss of his wife and mother. But like TR's 40 years earlier, her years of emotional trauma were over. And her political life was about to begin.

Twice widowed at 40, with three children and $2 million, Greenway went into politics, like the Roosevelt woman she was. In the blinding glare that comes off Franklin and Theodore, one tends to forget just how assertive were all these women, and how even Eleanor was no more than one of a type. TR's big sister Bamie was a noted adviser to statesmen. His daughter Alice had a shrewd, though destructive, political intellect. His young sister Corinne addressed Republican conventions, and worked up a career as a lecturer. Her daughter Corinne was a career politician in Connecticut (working at times against FDR, with whom she stayed friendly) as well as the mother of Stewart and Joseph Alsop, the premier political reporters of their age.

It should have surprised no one when, soon after her husband's death, Greenway had become a political dynamo, as well as an entrepreneur and one of the founding mothers of Arizona's industrial life. "An old friend . . . found she had 'changed quite a lot, or perhaps I've only seen a side of you which I hadn't supposed to exist. . . . You really are a high-powered executive . . . Lord only knows what you will try to do next.'"

Deflecting a move to draft her for governor, Greenway threw herself into FDR's run for the presidency, winning the next year a special election to Congress, where the press described her as a "luscious personality" (though enriched by a heavy patina of sorrow) and a "full-blown rose." Always a babe, she wrung passionate letters from the sculptor of her late husband's statue, and a proposal of marriage from Harry O. King, a onetime deputy administrator of the National Recovery Administration, whom she wed in 1939 when she had left Washington.

Roosevelts continued to run through her life, as in 1940, when she broke ranks to vote for Wendell Willkie (which did not break up her friendship with Eleanor) and on April 5, 1945, when she entertained the artist Elizabeth Shoumatoff, en route to Warm Springs to paint what would be the last portrait of FDR. Isabella herself died eight years later, mourned by the rest of the Roosevelts, to whom she had been, if not a blood sister, very much in that family's mold. ♦

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Is God in the Details?

The Archbishop of Canterbury looks backward.

BY EDWARD SHORT

"God will not always be a Tory," Lord Byron once assured a dispirited correspondent. This should comfort at least one side in the debates now raging within the Church of England—particularly the several hundred Anglican priests who vow that they will defy their bishops' ban on same-sex marriage and take advantage of the Civil Partnership Act to marry their partners.

Why Study the Past?
The Quest for the Historical Church
by Rowan Williams
Eerdmans, 129 pp., $15

It will not budge the primate of Nigeria, who has warned that if the C of E connives at such partnerships, it risks expulsion from the worldwide church. Meanwhile, 400 Anglican clergy have already left the church over women priests, setting the church back £26 million in hardship payments. And more defections are expected, now that women bishops are in the offing.

With church unity in tatters, and the word *implosion* in every other headline, it is amazing that Rowan Williams, the 104th archbishop of Canterbury, has managed to sit down and write such an engaging book. *Why Study the Past?* is a lively summons to both liberals and conservatives to learn from the past and turn their polemical swords into ploughshares. At the very least, it should introduce some civility into their debates.

In his quest for the historical church, Williams leads his readers to the 4th century, when the old Roman world had entered its dotage and a spry new Christian faith was taking its place, and to the Reformation of the 16th century, when reformers charged that the church had become untenably corrupt and a new reformed church was needed. In both periods, the great question was what constituted the church's true identity. Williams contends that, by looking at how the two periods tried to answer that question, contemporary Anglicans might be able to sort out their differences.

To put his quest in some critical context, readers might wish to get hold of Henry Bettenson's anthology, *The Early Christian Fathers* (1956), Charles Norris Cochrane's *Christianity and Classical Culture* (1940), one of W.H. Auden's favorite books, and Christopher Haigh's *English Reformations* (1993), all of which are available in paperback. None is cited by Williams, but they complement or challenge what he has to say in many respects.

Apropos the study of history, Williams insists that it is "dangerous and stultifying . . . [to] make any part of the past a mirror for our own preferences and assumptions." This echoes an instructive aside in Julian Barnes's witty novel, *Flaubert's Parrot* (1985), where the narrator observes:

> What a curious vanity it is of the present to expect the past to suck up to it. The present looks back at some great figure of an earlier century and wonders, Was he on our side? Was he a goodie? What a lack of self-confidence this implies: the present wants both to patronize the past by adjudicating on its political acceptability, and also to be flattered by it, to be patted on the back and told to keep up the good work . . .

No historians have been guiltier of this sort of self-justifying history than Protestant historians—the Whig historians Macaulay and Froude wrote some of the most biased history ever written—so Williams is right to counsel against it. He takes the case of the Gnostics, a heretical sect of the early Church, to illustrate his point. The Gnostics were against episcopal hierarchy and biblical literalism but they were also for predestination based on class and the evil of women and the flesh. As Williams says, contemporary Anglicans will need to think twice before they present them as "forerunners of a liberal and enlightened faith fitted for the contemporary market."

It is a mark of Williams's intellectual probity that he doesn't sidestep the problems facing his church. Indeed, there is an almost reckless honesty about the book. After conceding that the ordination of women and homosexuals is making mincemeat of Anglican unity, he says that the question Anglicans should ask themselves is not whether such innovations promote inclusion or pluralism but whether they "make sense of the commitments that make sense of martyrdom."

This is nicely nuanced, but it settles nothing, and the archbishop admits as much when he says, "Perhaps the most uncomfortable suggestion that might arise from these thoughts is that we may not know the answers to some of our contemporary and agonizing dilemmas without some quite specific and concrete challenge that could come from an authority claiming ultimate and sacred authority." For an archbishop of Canterbury to make such a concession is rather remarkable. The absence of any agreed authority has always haunted the church—whether in its Protestant or its Anglo-Catholic formulation—and Williams deserves credit for looking at how that exacerbates current controversy.

When it comes to the Bible, to "the touchstone of authoritative teaching," as he calls it, he denies his flock their accustomed assurances. "All serious study," he says, "is a kind of dispossession; difficulty is a moral matter, something that refuses us the comfort we crave." Accordingly, the authority of the Bible "cannot be taken to mean

Edward Short is at work on a study of John Henry Newman and his contemporaries.

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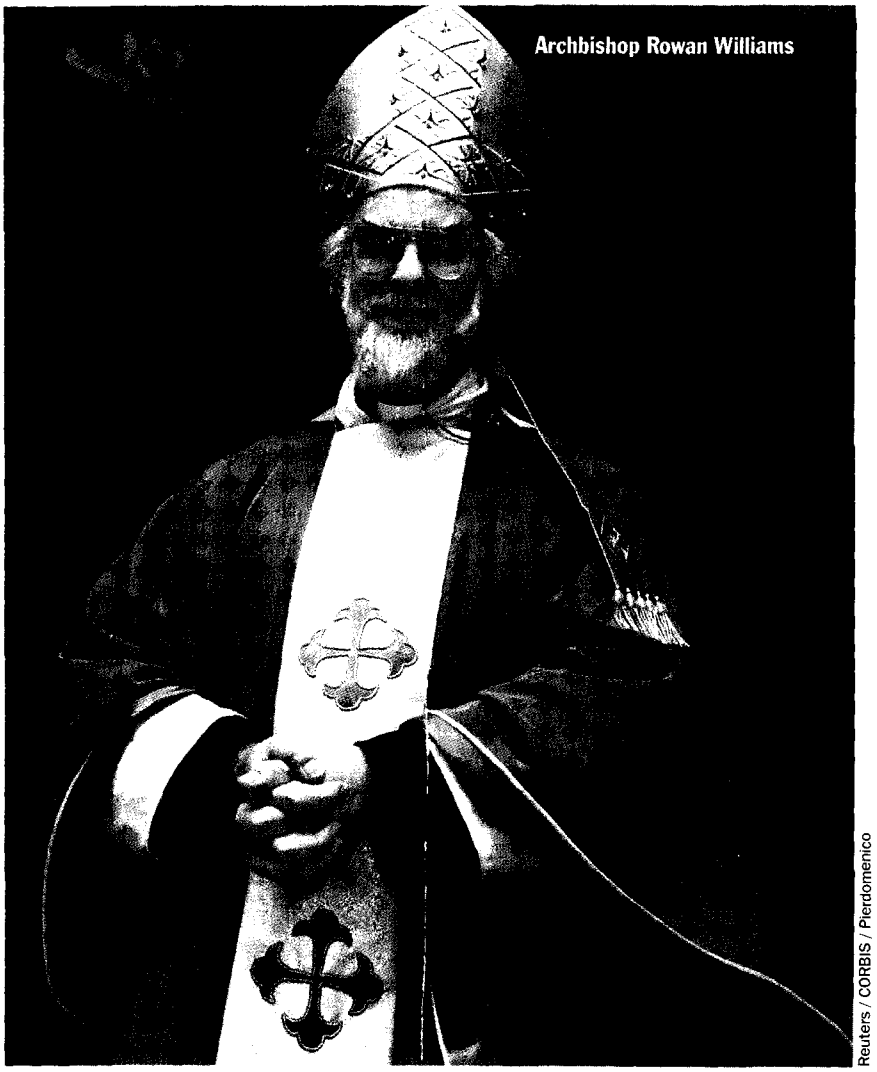
that all we need to do in order to arrive at orthodox faith is to reconstruct what was going on in the minds of the human authors of Scripture."

Indeed, Williams goes further: Even if one knows how to read one's Bible, and takes from it nothing other than what one can defend as true, still one may be mistaken, for "the powerful idea has been introduced that the past might be a source of deception; that there has been a primitive disaster in which truth has been lost or overlaid." One can only imagine how that would have gone down in the 19th century, when most Anglicans still believed with the 17th-century divine William Chillingworth that "the Bible and the Bible only is the religion of Protestants."

As Williams shows, authority is a thorny matter, but it is nothing as thorny as the chaos that follows its rejection. Chaos, however, doesn't daunt the archbishop. In some respects, he embraces it as a token of Christian authenticity. It is at the heart of his discussion of the Church and its identity. The patristic Church defined itself in terms of discipline and doctrinal precision, by showing heresy the door and making orthodoxy at home. The apostolic was—and still is, for the Roman Catholic Church—the safeguard of tradition. As Tertullian put it, "If you care to exercise your curiosity in the business of your salvation, make a tour of the apostolic churches, in which to this day, the actual thrones of the apostles preside . . . where their authentic writings are read."

Go to Corinth, Philippi, Ephesus, Rome. The reformers of the 16th century rejected any suggestion that the true church could be a matter of human merit or achievement: It was the gratuitous gift of God. This followed from Luther's contention that there could only be justification by faith. But if one does away with authority and hierarchy, what becomes of Church identity, let alone Church order?

"There is something inescapably precarious about any Protestant resolution of these tensions," Archbishop Williams responds, "but a good Lutheran or Reformed Christian would have to say that such precariousness is appropriate to a life grounded in something other than worldly security." In other words, it might be a Christian's duty to abide a certain amount of doctrinal chaos, if orthodoxy can be shown to be delusive.


Archbishop Rowan Williams

Reuters / CORBIS / Pierdomenico

For some, this may seem disheartening reasoning. Has God really denied us the means of discovering what is true and what is false about Him? Isn't Christianity a revealed religion? Williams is afraid that definitive answers may not be forthcoming:

> What is sobering is the thought that we might not discover exactly what orthodoxy involves, short of a major crisis or threat. . . . And precisely because it is crisis that brings certain things to light, we are reminded that the Church's integrity, orthodoxy or whatever is a gift, not primarily an achievement.

That demotic *whatever* doesn't inspire confidence. Yet, on a fundamental level, Williams is skeptical of any definitions of orthodoxy or authority.

> Suppose the worst, suppose a void at the heart of humanity, a lack of any principle of continuity or integrity in the self; yes, but this is precisely where the alien claim of God's gift makes itself clear. The identity of the Christian, the identity of the Church, emerges—as never before—as an issue that has to do with the identity of humanity itself.

Here it may seem that the Welshman in Williams is getting the better of him. But he fully realizes how radical he is being: "To say that this is a high-risk step in the intellectual life of the Western Christian world is an understatement." The apparent moral here seems to be that if Anglicans, of whatever stripe, are bound to be equally wrong about what constitutes their true identity, they might cut each other

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a little slack when it comes to trying to define the indefinable.

The salient point for Williams is that Protestants (very broadly defined) have never properly heeded the challenge of their Lutheran founder: this is why their Church identity remains the same pressing problem now that it was in the 16th century. Roman Catholics may have opted for a robustly conservative, centralized church after the Council of Trent (1563)—the Counter Reformation's Congress of Vienna, as it were—but Protestants fared far worse in cobbling together their reformed Church.

"Historic Protestantism, in Britain, Germany, and elsewhere," Williams writes, echoing Kierkegaard at his most excoriating,

> has an embarrassing record of collusion with uncritical nationalism, stifling social conformism, patriarchy, and narrow class-dominated attitudes. . . . Anglicans defended the providential status of the British Empire and echoed the worst of the anti-German rabble-rousing in the First World War. This sort of religion has sanctioned people's social and political comfort zones: a very paradoxical effect to come from Luther's radical terror and trust in the face of God.

Some of this is unanswerable, but we need to qualify. The swipe at Anglican priests during World War I doesn't seem quite fair: What about the Anglican chaplains who followed their brave young sheep into the trenches? They certainly hadn't time for "anti-German rabble-rousing." About the willingness of the Anglican Church to march in step with "narrow class-dominated attitudes," that may be true to some extent, but there were lively exceptions. The popular English historian and Anglican curate J.R. Green, author of the *Short History of England* (1874), which sold in the millions in both Britain and America, spent years attending to the spiritual and material needs of the poorest of the poor in London's East End before the plague of the place, tuberculosis, carried him off at 46. He certainly wasn't your typical two-bottle man. And the Anglican clergy were interested in the Empire for their missions—on the whole, admirable missions—not because they supported Disraeli's vague imperial designs.

If one despairs of orthodoxy, of the sort of doctrinal definition that culminated in the Nicene Creed (325), it is perhaps inevitable that clamor for social justice should assume undue importance. One sees this in the Catholic Church in the misguided Marxism of liberation theology. Williams does not question the dubious idea of justice exercising many women and homosexuals in his fold, but he is adamant that his Church must oppose state evil. He applauds the German Confessing Church for opposing the anti-Semitic legislation of the Third Reich in 1936, and the South African church for opposing apartheid in the 1980s. But he hastens to remind his coreligionists that "the Church is not society's policeman; the law of the state is not by definition the pattern of Christlikeness which constitutes the community of believers."

Where this puts the individual believer is a nice question. Williams claims that the world is often governed by nothing more than "tragic pragmatism." Some, however, might not see this pragmatism as altogether *tragic* when compared with the often-appalling political naiveté of the Anglican Church—or, for that matter, of the Catholic Church. Consider the support that both gave to nuclear disarmament in the 1980s. Or the involvement of Vatican officials in the Oil-for-Food scandal. Or the support that the Anglican Church is currently giving to divestment from companies doing business with Israel.

Or what Williams has to say on the threat that radical Islam poses the West: "Confronted with Islam," he says, "Western modernity has yet to find a mode of engagement that allows for real self-criticism." That is an astounding statement from anyone who has spent as much time as Williams has in Western universities. Nevertheless, for the archbishop, "it seems almost impossible to grant that the new universal story of globalized communication and economic control and interaction does not inevitably lead to accepting the story of Western modernity's rational and universal triumph."

Here, presumably, is what constitutes "real self-criticism." Europe has problems getting along with its Islamic neighbors not because so many of them foment or support Islamic terrorism, but because Europe is economically controlling and triumphalist. Given a choice between that invidious sanctimony and state pragmatism, most sensible people would not hesitate to go with the latter.

Yet Williams is right to insist on what he calls the "alien citizenship" of Christians. By arguing that lay rulers had a distinct religious vocation, Luther and Calvin opened the door to an altogether too cozy relationship between Protestant believers and the Protestant state. "The result," as Williams observes, "was often a politically subservient Church and a bourgeois, undemanding piety." This Erastian marriage of convenience was what inspired John Henry Newman and his friends to form the Oxford Movement.

Towards the end of his life, after he had converted, Newman would tell the Catholic Union of Great Britain: "I think the best favor which sovereigns, parliaments, municipalities, and other political powers can do us is to let us alone." With these views, he would have been surprised by the archbishop's characterization of the Catholic Church's current approach to the state as tribal, resentful, and competitive. (*Tribal* is a pet term of opprobrium for the archbishop.) We shall have to wait and see how Benedict XVI engages not only Europe but the other states of the world.

In the meantime, no one interested in the fortunes of the Church of England, or its unflappable leader, will want to pass up this exuberant book. As Archbishop Williams says himself, "If it can contribute to a certain conversational humility . . . to a better awareness of the labor involved in historical understanding, it will have opened up a few windows in what can be a dangerously stifling environment."

The view from Lambeth Palace is a view of embattled hope. ♦

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The Good Doctor

How the philosopher-physician Moses Maimonides speaks to us. BY DAVID E. LOWE

Among post-Talmudic Jewish scholars, Moses Maimonides stands alone. His commentaries on the oral law, codification of rabbinic ordinances, and writings incorporating Aristotelian principles into Jewish belief—each a monumental achievement—address the most profound questions faced by modern man and offer fresh insights into the human condition many centuries after they were written.

Maimonides
by Sherwin B. Nuland
Schocken, 234 pp., $19.95

But Maimonides was much more than a scholar, and in the latest chronicle of his life and work, the physician-author Sherwin Nuland emphasizes his roles as a court physician in 12th-century Egypt, and as a statesman whose authority came to be recognized in Jewish communities throughout the world.

Maimonides is one of the first two volumes—the other is a biography of the biblical David by former poet laureate Robert Pinsky—of an ambitious project of Nextbook and Schocken entitled "Jewish Encounters," whose subjects range from Yehuda Halevi to Marc Chagall, from messianism to "Jews and power."

In light of his scholarly output, it is all the more remarkable that the life of Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, known in Hebrew literature by the acronym "Rambam" and in the West, since the Renaissance, by the Greek name Maimonides, was beset by turbulence, uprootedness, and, in his later years, a physically exhausting workload.

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Born in Cordoba under Muslim rule in 1135, the young Moses received tutoring from his father, Rabbi Maimon ben Joseph, a *dayyan* (judge) of the rabbinical court of Cordoba, as well as from others versed not only in Jewish law but also such secular subjects as philosophy, mathematics, and astronomy. The takeover of Cordoba during Moses' bar mitzvah year by the Almohades, a fanatical Muslim sect that presented non-Muslims with the choice of conversion or death, forced his family to abandon an ancestral home that had produced eight generations of scholars.

The family's wanderings eventually led it to the North African city of Fez, but continued persecution at the hands of the Almohades forced Maimonides to take a hazardous voyage to Palestine, then in the grip of the Crusades. Ultimately, he settled in Cairo, after a brief stay in Alexandria. (One reason he would give for the need to codify Jewish law would be to make it comprehensible to those Jews perpetually moving from place to place, and therefore unable to take the time to study it.) With the financial support of his half-brother, David, a dealer in precious stones, he was able to spend the next period writing and serving as a leader of Egyptian Jewry.

David's untimely death at sea while on a business trip removed that source of support. It also delivered a devastating personal blow. Maimonides' outspoken opposition to the practice of the day—allowing rabbis and scholars to live off community support—led him to pursue the practice of medicine. Eventually, he became one of the physicians of al-Fadil, the vizier of Saladin, who had become the virtual ruler of Egypt.

It was during his years as a physician that Maimonides completed his two most significant works, the *Mishneh Torah*, an unprecedented codification of Jewish law, and the *Guide for the Perplexed*, a treatise that made use of scientific and philosophical concepts to explain complicated passages from Biblical and rabbinic literature.

Although these works were vastly different from one another in terms of Maimonides' objectives and the audience he sought to address, he developed both from the premise that religion can, and should be, informed by rational philosophy. It was his view, in the words of Rabbi David Hartman, that "love and reverential fear of G-d—the two ultimate goals of Judaism—may be realized through knowledge of the natural and divine sciences." As Maimonides himself expressed it, far from being at odds with faith and belief, "it is through wisdom, in an unrestricted sense, that the rational matter that we receive from the law through tradition is demonstrated."

These works would not only help establish his reputation but would also make Maimonides a figure of controversy, both during his life and for centuries after his death. While the conflict between tradition and reason did not begin with Maimonides, his writings, which included frequent denunciations of the religious authorities of the day, brought it to the fore. For example, the very notion that one could presume to "codify" the vast oral law of the Talmud was seen as a threat to religious authority by making study of the sacred rabbinic texts superfluous, despite Maimonides' contention that his intention was, in fact, to stimulate further study.

Maimonides, who wrote with bold self-confidence, was not one to shrink from controversy, and many of the debates he provoked stemmed from allegoric explanations of Talmudic texts and Biblical tales, his conception of the proper understanding of anthropomorphism, attempts to rationalize miracles, and his understanding of

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Moses Maimonides

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central theological concepts such as afterlife and bodily resurrection. In each case, his rational approach would be at odds with more traditional explanations, and would foreshadow later controversies and tensions, particularly in medieval European Jewish communities.

In the *Guide*, addressed to a single talented student, Maimonides displayed an elitism bordering on arrogance, writing that he "could find no other device by which to teach a demonstrated truth other than by giving satisfaction to a single virtuous man while displeasing ten thousand ignoramuses." But Maimonides was not indifferent to the masses, and his letters to various Jewish communities, which helped establish his international reputation, displayed a profound empathy for those facing religious oppression.

In his "Epistle on Conversion," addressed to the community in Morocco, Maimonides delivered a scathing indictment of a distinguished Talmudist (this "ranter of nonsense") who had ruled that any Jew making a profession of Islam under the most extreme duress would be regarded as committing additional sins with each commandment of Judaism performed. Maimonides was enraged not so much by the requirement of martyrdom, which could have been legitimately argued under Jewish law, but rather the notion that anything short of it would nullify prayers and Jewish practices. Clearly, what was driving Maimonides was not simply a consideration of the law, but more practically, a calculation of what would preserve the community.

The complexity of Maimonides' life and work poses unusual challenges for the biographer, particularly someone like Nuland, whose background is not in philosophy and who is charged with making that life and work comprehensible to a general audience. (Somewhat disarmingly, he acknowledges this dilemma in his introduction.) One strategy he employs is to play to his strengths by focusing on Maimonides' medical career, including the 10 volumes that (paralleling his codification of the oral law) "were particularly useful to a physician who was seeking a clearly organized, accessible text written in so practical a way that it could be followed like a manual of patient care."

Nuland concludes that, in the end, what mattered most about Maimonides' life was his role as a leader of his community, and his devotion to its preservation and continuity. While Judaism needed to remain distinctive if it was to take its place among the other religious systems of the day, "an attempt must be made to demonstrate its compatibility with the methods and logic of the Aristotelians."

But while Maimonides' importance as a historical figure should be appreciated, it is, in the end, his pathbreaking work that must continue to be studied. Those who are troubled by the modern divide between faith and reason, between belief and the scientific method, can find meaningful insights in the work of a man who lived eight centuries ago. ♦

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Books in Brief

***The Lincoln Lawyer* by Michael Connelly (Little, Brown, 404 pp., $26.95).** Though his publishers advance *The Lincoln Lawyer* as Michael Connelly's first legal thriller, he proved himself a master of courtroom give-and-take in *The Concrete Blonde* and *A Darkness More Than Night*, both police procedurals about Los Angeles cop Harry Bosch. In his first book about L.A. lawyer Mickey Haller, the former journalist paints a detailed portrait, often unsavory but uncomfortably believable, of the criminal justice process.

Haller, who does most of his business from a succession of Lincoln town cars, isn't a bad guy—both his ex-wives, one of them an assistant district attorney and the other his office manager, still like him, and he really wants to improve his relationship with his young daughter.

But his professional methods won't endear him to those wary of the defense bar: He lies routinely; his eye is constantly on the bottom line; every Christmas he rewards (with cash concealed in a mixed nut can) bail bondsmen who direct clients his way; and he is untroubled by the morality of getting acquittals or reduced sentences for guilty clients, considering that his necessary role in the system. What does trouble him is the prospect of failing an innocent client—but then, he reasons, when does someone in his business ever have an innocent client?

A referral from one of the recipients of his holiday largesse gets Haller a potential "franchise" (i.e., high-paying) client: real estate dealer Louis Ross Roulet, charged with attempting to rape and murder a prostitute. In the course of investigating the case, Haller uncovers a parallel to a murder for which one of his earlier clients was convicted and sent to prison.

Not believing the client's protestations of innocence, Haller had pushed him to accept a plea bargain. For various reasons familiar to thriller readers, the lawyer must carry on defending Roulet while looking for a way to exonerate his previous client.

Back in the day of Perry Mason, fictional trials usually focused on saving the unjustly accused. In recent years, in part because dubious verdicts in high-profile cases have remolded public attitudes, the opposite situation has been increasingly common: The criminal is known, and the problem is how to make the case. But how can you have a get-the-scumbag trial novel when your hero is the defense lawyer? Constantly intriguing and surprising the reader, Connelly answers the question in brilliant fashion.

—Jon L. Breen

***Nicholas: The Epic Journey from Saint to Santa Claus* by Jeremy Seal (Bloomsbury, 368 pp., $24.95).** The Santa Claus legend is traced in this eye-opening chronicle over a period of some 1,700 years. Would you believe that the Santa mystique originated in Byzantium, with St. Nicholas of Myra, a 4th-century Orthodox bishop? His popular name is a corruption of the Dutch "Sinterklaas."

Santa's reputation for generosity is recorded by his "preeminent chronicler," a Dark Ages scribe known as Symeon of Durham. According to Symeon, "the most charitable and the best known" of all the saint's good deeds was an episode called "Three Daughters." This trio was the progeny of a nobleman who had fallen on hard times. Not having the wherewithal for dowries, their father determined "to sell his daughters into prostitution." How else?

When Nicholas got wind of this, he went to the nobleman's house after dark and "threw a bag of gold through the window." Whereupon the father married off his eldest daughter, using the gold as her dowry. Broke again, the parent was about to sell off his second daughter when Nicholas came through with another bag of gold. Ditto for daughter number three.

The Three Daughters legend received worldwide currency. It's been commemorated on 8th- or 9th-century frescoes on Roman walls, "on millions of Russian icons and on the great stained glass windows of northern France and Germany." And by the three golden balls that identify pawn shops. Jeremy Seal traces the secularization of Santa as the myth made its way from Turkey to the North Pole, which became Santa's home base when explorer Robert Peary reached it in 1909.

At one time, hijacking sacred relics was a popular fixation. So, as a scenario, Seal follows the remains of St. Nicholas as they are purloined from various sanctuaries by one band of admirers or another. The definitive burglary occured in 1087, when a band of Venetian sailors transfered the saint's relics to their home port from a sarcophagus in Alexandria.

To endow the legend with virtual reality, the author tries to introduce Santa's current incarnation to his two small daughters. On this particular Christmas, Santa can be found in a British exhibition hall, near Birmingham, Seal's home. He's ensconced in a jerry-built abode known as Santa's Kingdom. It's a tough sell. The reaction of 6-year-old Anna is, "That wasn't the real Father Christmas, was it?" To identify the real icon is the mission of "the epic journey." It's a good trip.

—Martin Levin

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Not a Parody

Last week, a U.S. Army captain sent an email to James Taranto of the *Wall Street Journal*, which was featured in Taranto's "Best of the Web" column:

"I just got back from my third deployment from Iraq on Friday, and I happened to be at the dentist and saw a completely offensive ad from the idiots at MoveOn.org this morning. Anyway, it is a Bush-bashing ad that pretends to be arguing for American soldiers' families as they will miss the holidays, and it shows turkey and crying wives and blames Bush for it all. Here is the crucial part of the ad that I would like to bring to your attention. As they pretend to argue on my behalf, they show a group of soldiers standing around a table in the Middle East."

VOICEOVER:
"A HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND AMERICAN MEN AND WOMEN ARE STUCK IN IRAQ."

The captain continued: "These are not your normal, everyday U.S. soldiers, though. If you look at the frame, they are actually British soldiers. One is in shorts (we don't have shorts as a normal combat uniform), and the others are all clearly wearing British pattern fatigues. . . . These [turkeys] pretend to argue on my behalf and bash the president in the name of my crying wife, and they don't even know what an American soldier looks like!"

And what was MoveOn.org's reaction? Like a bad gambler holding a bad hand, they doubled down—they Photoshopped the image of the British soldiers on their website to hide the shorts (as first spotted by the eagle-eyed blogger at *gopandcollege.blogspot.com*).

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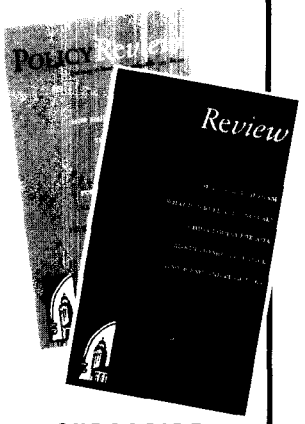

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In the new issue of *Policy Review*

Iraq Is Not Vietnam

A pernicious equivalence

The various enemies the coalition faces in Iraq differ from the VC and the NVA in three critical ways. First, they have a variety of more or less well developed ideologies, but none that is remotely as appealing to the American or international public as communism and anticolonialism were. Second, although they do receive support from outside Iraq, that support pales to insignificance in comparison to the assistance the Soviet Union provided to North Vietnam and North Vietnam to the VC. Third, they have infinitely less meaningful military experience than either the VC or the NVA, and much of that experience was bad.

—Frederick W. Kagan

China's Quest for Asia

Beijing fills a vacuum

In the range of issues where U.S. and Chinese interests are opposite, China has been very adept at choosing only those issues where it is confident it can force its Southeast Asian neighbors to side with China and against the United States. When there is no downside to choosing Beijing in a given policy area and potentially severe consequences to choosing Washington, Southeast Asian countries will understandably go with Beijing. Washington must consider ways to counter that trend. Otherwise, Southeast Asia will fall into the habit of siding with China—even when there is no benefit in doing so.

—Dana Dillon and John J. Tkacik Jr.

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